

GRAND-LEGACY:  
A HANDBOOK FOR GRANDPARENTS WHO WISH TO SHARE  
THEIR FAITH IN CHRIST WITH THEIR GRANDCHILDREN  
IN AN AGE-APPROPRIATED MANNER

A THESIS-PROJECT  
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY  
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To my two Nanas.

But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his  
righteousness with their children's children.

--- Psalm 103:17

## CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
ABSTRACT	x
Chapter	
1. THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING	1
2. THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK	38
3. LITERATURE REVIEW	70
4. PROJECT DESIGN	116
5. OUTCOMES	156
Appendix	
A. ERIK ERIKSON'S PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CHART	178
B. THE WORDLESS BOOK (BOOKLET)	179
C. GOOD NEWS IN COLOR (TRACT)	182
D. THE BRIDGE ILLUSTRATION (TRACT)	184
E. THE FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS (TRACT)	187
F. THE ROMANS ROAD (TRACT)	193
G. BIBLICAL PLAN OF SALVATION (CARDSTOCK)	196
H. PRIMARY GOSPEL TOOLS PUBLISHERS	198
I. THE CHRISTOPHER'S AND THE CHILDREN'S CROWN BOOK LIST	200
J. PACKET CONTENTS FOR SEMINAR	209
K. CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS	210

L. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES	213
BIBLIOGRAPHY	220
VITA	228

## ILLUSTRATIONS

### Tables

1. Grandson by Age	12
2. Grandchildren's Responses on Contact with and Best Grandparent	16
3. Erik Erickson Psychosocial Development (Infants)	70
4. Erik Erickson Psychosocial Development (Toddlers)	73
5. Erik Erickson Psychosocial Development (Early Childhood)	78
6. Erik Erickson Psychosocial Development (Childhood)	80
7. Erik Erickson Psychosocial Development (Adolescence)	84
8. Erik Erickson Psychosocial Development (Early Adulthood)	88
9. Erik Erickson's Psychosocial Development	127
10. Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development	128
11. Lawrence Kohlberg's Moral Development	129
12. James Fowlers Faith Development	130

### Figures

1. The Legacy Home	131
2. The Legacy Home: Grand-Babies	135
3. The Legacy Home: Grand-Toddlers	138
4. The Legacy Home: Grand-Preschoolers	141
5. The Legacy Home: Grand-Kids	144

6. The Legacy Home: Grand-Teens	148
7. The Legacy Home: Grand-Man/Woman	151



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## ABSTRACT

Can Grandparent share their faith in Christ with their grandchildren in an age-appropriated manner? The project begins with examining the general and spiritual influence of grandparents, followed by exploring the Biblical mandate to do so, switches to include various development stages of grandchildren using Erik Erickson's psychosocial, Jean Piaget's cognitive, Lawrence Kohlberg's moral, and James Fowler's faith development. This is followed by a seminar presentation which included an age and developmentally appropriated gospel tool. The final chapter measured the efficacy of the Project to answer the thesis-question with the results measured on an entering and exiting survey.

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

### Introduction

As a pastor who was influenced greatly by my own grandparent's faith, I understand the long-term impact of a grandparent's faith journey. Recently, I was called to serve a Presbyterian Church in a recreational retirement community in Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri. Many retirees have turned their secondary lake-homes into their permanent residences. Often, these retirees have children and grandchildren who stay for extended periods, especially during the summer months. With so many grandchildren in the area, I would like to equip the congregation with basic age-appropriate "Gospel" tools and provide opportunities to utilize those tools. The ultimate goal is to provide an intentional, understandable, and easy-to-follow handbook that combines age-appropriate gospel-sharing techniques with age-relevant suggestions for application.

The thesis question presented is: How can grandparents influence their grandchildren with the Gospel message in an age-appropriate manner? In other words, how can grandparents provide a progressively consistent witness of Christ to grandchildren as the young person journeys from infancy, through early childhood, childhood, adolescence, and into early adulthood?

In an attempt to answer this question, the Thesis-Project will concentrate on the influence of grandparents and the psychosocial, cognitive, moral and faith development

of children. The project component will seek to coordinate age-appropriate evangelism materials, ideas, tools and suggestions that a Christian grandparent can utilize during different stages of the grandchild's life.

### A Snapshot of the Thesis-Project

This first chapter discusses the problem and its setting. Here, the subject of grandparents and their influence will be presented. The first section deals with the "general influence" of grandparents, and the second section covers the "spiritual influence" of grandparents.

Chapter Two provides a biblical and theological foundation for the project. It explores the unique role of family, especially grandparents, in the area of religious education within the Hebrew culture of the Old Testament and the Christian Culture of the New Testament.

Chapter Three, surveys selected literature that provides an explanation of the Psychosocial, Cognitive, Moral, and Faith development of grandchildren. For the purposes of this thesis, Erik Erikson's "Psychosocial Developmental Stages" is the organizational tool for understanding the mental and emotional advancement that a grandchild experiences through each life stage.<sup>1</sup> Each age group: Infancy (1-11/2), Toddler (2-4), Early Childhood (4-6), Childhood (7-12), Adolescence (13-19), and Early Adulthood (20-39), will be considered separately. In addition, other topics are

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix A.

discussed, such as, how to communicate with children, the use of religious symbols objects, and primary and secondary evangelical materials and tools.

Chapter Four presents the project design in the form of a handbook presented to the congregation in a one-day seminar. The seminar was entitled, "Grand-Legacy: How to share your Faith in Christ with Your Grandchildren." A questionnaire was distributed before and after the seminar to evaluate the effectiveness of the presentation, the quality and usefulness of the material, and the overall interest in implementing the proposed ideas.

Chapter Five presents the outcomes of the thesis-project. This includes a consideration and summation of the initial thesis-question. In addition, it presents a summary of the content, and it explores ways in which the handbook helped answer the thesis-question.

### **The Selected Audience**

The intended Christian grandparent that this project is designed to best serve is one who is interested in the unique place of influence that they have in the life of their grandchild. The handbook is meant to help that Christian grandparent be more effective and deliberate in when, and how, they can broach the subject of the gospel at optimum ages and times. However, this spiritual and religious influence should not supersede the spiritual religious role of the Christian parent. Many Christian parents desire that grandparents act as spiritual re-enforcers, not as sole guides. When possible, a grandparent should ascertain from the parents what role they can best fulfill. For

example, if a parent desires the opportunity to lead their own child to the Lord at some point, the grandparent's role is not to disregard the parents wish. However, they can continue to exemplify and provide spiritual fodder for the parents, and especially for grandchildren in the collaborative effort to have the grandchild experience a living testimony of the life that Christ offers.

Second, the intended ideal Christian grandparent is one whose grandchildren come to visit occasionally and temporarily. A joint effort by the parent and grandparent provides two separate homes and two separate roles providing two exclusive Christian examples to the grandchild. Yet, even in this ideal case, grace is needed.

There are more than a few scenarios where "extra-grace" seemingly would need to be present as extenuating circumstances have put a strain on the family unit. The first is the context in which a grandparent is actually raising a grandchild. Obviously, this creates its own set of spiritual, relational, and familial dynamics because the grandparent fills the parental role. Interestingly,

According to a 1997 American Medical Association study, grandparents who care for their grandchildren fulltime are about twice as likely as other grandparents to suffer from depression. You are not alone. Nearly 6 million children in the United States are being raised by grandparents. In these grandparent-headed households, 43% are headed by a grandmother with no husband. Most of these grandparents find their lives changed, their finances stretched, and their parenting techniques not up to the task of helping troubled grandchildren.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Sue Johnson, Julie Carlson and Elizabeth Bower, *GrandLoving: Making Memories with Your Grandchildren*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Lancaster, VA.: Heartstrings Press, 2010), 166.

In other words, 1 in 10 families headed by a grandparent, now have a grandchild in the household. To be specific, "About 2.5 million grandparents are responsible for raising their grandchildren."<sup>3</sup>

A second scenario is the grandparents who live with their children and grandchildren in a multigenerational setting? "Over the past several decades large demographic shifts (decreased marriage, increased divorce, and non-marital fertility) and increasing longevity have resulted in a greater reliance on multigenerational bonds."<sup>4</sup> Research has shown that "the share of children in three-generational households grew from 6% in 2001 to 8% in 2011 and nearly 25% of all U.S. children live in three-generational households in early childhood."<sup>5</sup> Although this is an increasingly common situation, the sheer physical closeness of the family members may make this family operate more as a "single unit" than unique and separate entities. Role confusion is not the issue, but role distinction could be.

These are just two scenarios that may be less than ideal. Others could include the case of multi-family grand parenting of step-grandchildren, and added grandparents. "Between 20% and 25% of grandparents will be step-grandparents either through their own or through their adult children divorces and remarriages."<sup>6</sup> In

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<sup>3</sup> S.V. Bosak, "Grandparents Today," *The Legacy Project.org*, accessed May 24, 2015, <http://www.tcpnow.com/guides/gptoday.html>.

<sup>4</sup> V. L. Bengtson, "Beyond the Nuclear Family: The Increasing Importance of Multigenerational Bonds," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 63, (2001): 1-16, accessed May 24, 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2001.00001.x>.

<sup>5</sup> N.V. Pilkauskas, & M.L. Martinson, "Three-Generational Family Households in Early Childhood: Comparisons Between the United States and Australia." *Demographic Research*, 30, (2014), accessed May 24, 2015, 1639-1652. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4045/DemRes.2014.30.60>.

<sup>6</sup> Bosak, "Grandparents Today."

structuring this project, the “ideal” situation was assumed, but not to the exclusion of the less than ideal situations.

To answer the questions of “if” and “how” a grandparent can influence their grandchild with the gospel, we have to first consider the “if” and “how” grandparents already are, or can be influential in the general sense. First, we will consider the general influence grandparents possess followed by a consideration of the grandparent’s spiritual influence.

## **The General Influence of Grandparents**

### **The Evolving Role of Grandparenting**

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, grandparents, particularly grandfathers, exerted considerable economic and social influence based on land ownership. Elder male landholders generally retained their land and authority over their families until they died. With industrialization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the standing of landholders was undermined. The power and authority once granted for experience and wisdom decreased. New technology often made the talents of the old appear obsolete. And the new economy offered an attractive alternative to young adults who, in the past, would have dutifully worked in the family enterprise. Increases in life expectancy increased the longevity of older family members, but they were likely to be chronically ill and require care. So the Proportion of the tri-generational households increased significantly. While people honored the ideal of mutual support in families, unclear lines of authority often led to conflict and dissention....In 1900, over 60% of older adults lived with children; by 1962, that had dropped to 25%; and by 1975 it had dropped to only 14%. Older adults started viewing autonomy and leisure as the goals of their “golden years.” They had no important economic role in family life, but neither did they pose a threat. Their independence meant that they could become friends and companions to their grandchildren. Experts counseled grandparents to strive for love and friendship with their grandchildren rather than demand respect and obedience. So rather than disciplining, grandparents cuddled, rather than speaking authoritatively they listened affectionately....Grandparents themselves feared of meddling in their children’s and grandchildren lives. So that



while the relationship, when it existed, could be very positive, it's limited and tenuous nature overall brought us to where we are today.<sup>7</sup>

The loss of overtly authoritative roles in the family certainly resonates with many in today's society. Many grandparents no longer feel that it is their place to step into, or to meddle, in the lives of their children and grandchildren. While this lack of intimacy and interconnectedness that were once family standards may be a reason to lament, times change, and with every change comes the opportunity to interact anew and to establish new family customs. It also provides an opportunity to cherish new roles in which society may have forced a different overall view of familial roles. It could be said that these new roles may be more balanced roles.

Consider the fact that, "The truth is that for the first time on U.S. history, millions of grandchildren are actually vulnerable to having less time to spend with their grandparents than with previous generations."<sup>8</sup> At the same time,

Grandchildren view their relationship with their grandparents as important to their lives, with enjoyment, emotional ties, and obligation affecting how they define the significance of the relationship. Young children see their relationship with their grandparents in terms of what a grandparent does for them, whereas adolescents find in the grandparent as someone who will listen to them and maintain their trust. Young adults with somewhat more perspective and life experience, begin to convey a grandparent's influence in their lives especially with regard to value-laden topics like religion and politics.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Bosak, "Grandparents Today."

<sup>8</sup> Allison Gilbert, "Why Kids Need Grandparents," *Grandparents.Com*, accessed May 24, 2015, <http://www.grandparents.com/family-and-relationships/caring-for-children/parentless-parents-allison-gilbert>.

<sup>9</sup> Bosak, "Grandparents Today."

The roles may be being redefined, and time constraints may be more of a way of life, but the importance of grandparents has never been so great, and the influence granted to grandparents with their grandchildren has never been so needed.

### The First Hurdle

Being a grandparent for many is unavoidable. How one chooses to accept the role, with its responsibilities and challenges, is a choice. The first challenge is to acknowledge that one has reached the age where being a grandparent is no longer an illusion or a far off event. As Bosak has said,

The title of “grandparent” seems to be a bit more loaded. Perhaps it’s because “grandparent” is often perceived to be synonymous with “old,” which is considered a bad thing in our youth-obsessed culture. Grand-parenting is certainly about generations, but not necessarily about old age---especially today as active, educated, healthy baby boomers head into the grand- parenting years.<sup>10</sup>

The choice is to relish or relinquish. There are those who obviously relish the given, though not chosen, role of grandparent from the very beginning. Others gradually grow into the role and find an increasing confidence and comfort in interacting with both child and “grandchild” over time. Others simply choose to relinquish the role from the beginning, and they never really do come around to accept the responsibility and the privilege of occupying such a lofty title in another human beings life. Still others relish the role, but through circumstances that are often beyond their control, have to live as though they have relinquished it. Hard feelings with children, geographic

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<sup>10</sup> Bosak, “Grandparents Today.”

distances, poor health, and senior living facilities are just a few reasons why some grandparents simply settle for only the title.

At the same time, there is also the limited role one can relish, but which must be shared. "Between 20% and 25% of grandparents will be step-grandparents either though their own or their grown children's divorces and remarriages. Many children have 6 to 8 adults in the 'grandparent' role in their lives."<sup>11</sup> Still, once one gets over the first hurdle, the question is, "What can I offer to this little one who has taken up a new but, oh so good, place in my life?" We will look at the one side of the two-sided grandparent coin in considering the role of Grandfather.

#### Grandfather, Granddad, Grandpa...

Did you know that 95% of all people over the age of 65 who have adult children also have grandchildren? Did you know that the average age at which Americans become grandparents is 45, and that a majority of men can expect to become grandfathers at age 52? That means that men today can expect to spend the majority of their adult years in this very role?<sup>12</sup>

So writes Ohio State University's Kirk Bloir, who provides one of the scant research resources concerning the role of grandfathers. In his research, Bloir concentrates on three unique contributions that grandfathers make in the lives of their grandchildren. The first is the ability to provide a "sounding board." "Because grandfathers are one step removed from the direct disciplinary and parenting

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<sup>11</sup> Bosak, "Grandparents Today."

<sup>12</sup> Kirk Bloir, "What About Grandfathers?" *Senior Series: Ohio State University Extension SS-195-02*, accessed June 7, 2015, <http://ohioline.osu.edu/ss-fact/0195.html>.

responsibilities, grandchildren tend to be more relaxed more open to sharing, and may ask more thoughtful questions of their grandfathers.”<sup>13</sup> Grandfathers experience a great deal of satisfaction from these conversations. Grandchildren experience a grown-up ear without grown up demands. A sense of what should or could they do is a replacement for the much more ready this is what you need or have to do.

Second, “grandfathers can be a powerful influence in the area of value development by teaching about perseverance, loyalty, hard work, patience, and sacrifice from their life stories. Grandfathers have lived through wars, hard times, cultural changes and technological revolutions and may tell their stories in a lively, engaging way, which allows the story to do the teaching.”<sup>14</sup> Many of these lessons learned are those in which a grandchild sees the outcome of having gotten through a life experience. This can provide encourage for them in the situations in which they find themselves at this stage in their lives.

Finally, grandfathers can embed a strong sense of family. “Grandfathers are living links between the generations; they help grandchildren become aquatinted with extended family members, either in person or through photographs and stories.”<sup>15</sup> Perhaps, the most encouraging statement that Bloir makes is, “Grandfathers have a vitally important role to play, and today’s grandfathers are stepping up to the plate and

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<sup>13</sup> Bloir, “What About Grandfathers?”

<sup>14</sup> Bloir, “What About Grandfathers?”

<sup>15</sup> Bloir, “What About Grandfathers?”

fulfilling it.”<sup>16</sup> When considering the strong history of grandfather figures, it is quite refreshing to hear that more grandfathers are feeling the liberty and the call to make more of an effort to live up to their given title: grand.

Yet, a question for grandfathers has to do with connectedness. Stories are fine, but what about intimacy? Passing along values and memories of the past is worthy task, but what about grandchildren that will love me and like me? Who will I feel closest to? Plus, what about the overriding fact that grandmothers are usually more appreciated, loved, and cherished? The *Oxford Institute of Aging Working Paper* provides some of the answers for grandfathers and grandmothers alike.

A study in which 300 grandchildren who had at least one living grandparent were asked two pointed questions: 1) who is the grandparent that you had the most contact with? And 2) with which grandparent did you best get along? Overwhelmingly, grandchildren indicated they had the most contact with, and got long better with, the maternal grandparents. In addition, granddaughters within every age-group (<12, 12-15, 16+) chose maternal grandmothers as the appealing favorite for contact and intimacy. The same was true of grandsons until the age of 12. Then an interesting change occurred. Commenting on the results of the study, “Of greater significance however, we see a clear majority of grandsons aged 12 and over selecting maternal

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<sup>16</sup> Blair, “What About Grandfathers?”

grandfathers (32 out of 56, 57.1 per cent) rather than maternal grandmothers (24 out of 56, 42.9 per cent) as the grandparent 'they get on with best.'"<sup>17</sup>

		Mat GM		Mat GF	
	N	%	N	%	Significance
Age					P-value=0.109
<12	11	31.4	5	13.5	
12-15	23	65.7	25	67.9	
16+	1	2.9	7	18.9	
Total	35	100	37	100	

Table 1. Grandson by Age

Not surprisingly, granddaughters stay more connected with their maternal grandmothers. However, grandsons begin to find more of an affinity with grandfathers as they reach puberty, and beyond. Shared gender, joint preferences for the outdoors, and the proverbial progression from being educated to having to work, plays a part of the shift. In general, grandfathers feel the greatest connectedness with older grandsons.

What about paternal verses maternal grandfathering?

Wheelock and Jones (2002) study into the complementary care provided by maternal and paternal grandparents in the north of England found that while the care of children is mostly likely to be undertaken by maternal grandmothers,

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<sup>17</sup> Robin Mann, Hafiz T.A. Khan and George W. Leeson, "Age and Gender Difference in Grandchildren's Relationships with their Maternal Grandfathers and Grandmothers," *Oxford Institute of Aging Working Papers*, No.209, Ed. Kenneth Howse (February 2009).

maternal grandfathers came second and fared better than paternal grandmothers and grandfathers.<sup>18</sup>

Susan Adcox adds, "All grandparents are not created equal. Both scientific surveys and anecdotal evidence show that maternal grandparents are closer to grandchildren than paternal grandparents. The usual ranking goes like this, from closest to least close: Maternal grandmother, maternal grandfather, paternal grandmother, and paternal grandfather."<sup>19</sup> She goes on to explain her reasoning:

In spite of strides in gender equality, mothers are still likely to direct their children's activities, and they may give heightened importance to contact with their own parents.

Others hold that the relationship between a woman and her mother-in-law -- the paternal grandmother of her children -- is always going to be complicated. Possession, so to speak, of a treasured male has been passed from mother to wife. A bit of jealousy and/or competitiveness is natural and may stand in the way of a close relationship, which may in turn stand in the way of closeness between grandparent and grandchild.

Scientists offer a different explanation, an evolutionary thesis, which some observer's discount. This scientific explanation holds that mothers are always certain that they are the parents of their children, whereas there may be uncertainty in a father's mind. Before the age of DNA testing, a father had scant means of proving that the child said to be his actually carried his genes. That goes doubly true for a grandfather wondering whether his grandchild is actually his grandchild.

So the maternal grandmother knows with practically 100% certainty that her grandchild is genetically related to her, a maternal grandfather or a paternal grandmother has only half of that certainty and a paternal grandfather has no certainty at all.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> J. Wheelock and K. Jones, "Grandparents are the Next Best Thing: Informal Childcare for Working Parents in Urban Britain," *Critical Social Policy* Vol. 31, No. 3, 441-463.

<sup>19</sup> Susan Adcox, "Maternal Vs. Paternal Grandparents: One Side Is Consistently Closer to Grandchildren." *Parenting Now*, updated November 19, 2014, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://grandparents.about.com/od/grandparentingtoday/fl/Maternal-Vs-Paternal-Grandparents.htm>.

<sup>20</sup> Adcox, "Maternal Vs. Paternal Grandparents."

Whatever the case, grandfathers and grandsons will likely grow closer as the one marches into the life ahead of them and the other contemplates the life behind them. Now, it's time to consider the other side of the two-sided grandparent coin, grandmothers.

### Grandmother, Grandma, Granny...

*Grandmother-grandchild relationships are simple. Grandmas are short on criticism and long on love.*

-- Author Unknown

Margaret Manning writes, "As grandparents, many women over 60 are embracing a new role in life. Seeing our children grow up to have children of their own is one of life's great joys and privileges, and it reminds us of how life is a circle, with so many stages and cycles. The young become the old, and 'The Child is father of the Man,' as William Wordsworth wrote."<sup>21</sup> Manning points out seven personality traits that make a grandmother successful:

Patience. The best grandparents tend to be full of patience – for their grandchildren as well as for their grandchildren's mom and dad. Even if your grandchildren are boisterous or sometimes misbehave, the best grandparents know that it's all part of growing up.

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<sup>21</sup> Margaret Manning, "The 7 Personality Traits of Successful Grandparents." *Sixty & Me*, accessed June 9, 2015, <http://sixtyandme.com/the-7-personality-traits-of-successful-grandparents/#.VXdSzkIfZU.email>.



*Generosity. The most successful grandparents tend to be generous – not necessarily in terms of buying toys, gifts and offering financial generosity, but generous with their time, generous with their hospitality and generous with advice (when asked).*

*Unconditional Love. The best grandparents are a rock-solid foundation of love in a child's life. Children need to know that no matter what might be going on in their lives, no matter what disappointments they might encounter at school or on the street out in the world, they are always safe and loved at grandma's house.*

*Empathy. Successful grandparents learn once again how to see the world through a child's eyes. This is a surprising and wonderful privilege of being a grandparent – we get to interact with our grandchildren and live life, for a little while, with their sense of time and their capacity for wonder.*

*Willingness to Listen. The best grandparents know how to listen. Just being there to listen to your grandchildren's stories and encourage their enthusiasms is a wonderful gift to give.*

*Detachment. "Detachment" doesn't mean that you don't care about your grandchildren – it means you know how to maintain a healthy distance without meddling or constantly injecting your own views. Even if your own (grown) son or daughter isn't doing everything "the right way" or "the normal way" in raising your grandkids, even if they follow different traditions or aren't raising your grandkids in the same church or faith as you, the best grandparents know how to let things be and allow your grown children to chart their own course as parents.*

*Presence. Being a grandparent isn't always about buying gifts or hosting dinners or taking your grandchildren on special vacations or anything like that. Aside from all of the fun things to do together with your grandchildren (which are wonderful), some of the best gifts you can offer your grandchildren are just the gifts of your time and your presence. Children learn a great deal just from being in the same room with you, watching how you prepare a meal, listening to you sing your favorite song. Seeing multiple generations of their family is an important way for children to learn who they are and how to live. This transmission of identity and family connection can be one of the greatest and simplest gifts of all.<sup>22</sup>*

The preceding list is one of many that could describe the characteristics and qualities of a grandmother. However, these seven personality traits reveal a healthy grandmother, as well as a good grandma-grandchild relationship.

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<sup>22</sup> Margaret Manning, "The 7 Personality Traits of Successful Grandparents."

In the Oxford Study,

The 350 grandchildren completing questionnaires with at least one grandparent alive came from 256 families (some were completed by siblings), with a relatively even split between the two schools (181 for the private school, and 170 for the state school). This comprised of 208 granddaughters aged between 4 and 18 and 142 grandsons aged between 6 and 18. Of the 256 families with at least one grandparent still alive, were 208 maternal grandmothers, 180 maternal grandfathers, 189 paternal grandmothers and 148 paternal grandfathers.<sup>23</sup>

Grandmothers and especially maternal grandmothers rank highest where the two questions of “most contact” and “getting along with best.”

	Contact	Contact	Best	Best
<i>Grandparents</i>	n	%	n	%
Maternal Grandmother	138	39.4	112	32.9
Maternal Grandfather	36	10.3	70	20.6
Paternal Grandmother	43	12.3	46	13.6
Paternal Grandfather	14	4.0	27	7.9
Both Maternal Grandparents	62	17.7	28	8.2
Both Paternal Grandparents	24	6.9	5	1.5
All Grandparents	21	6.0	30	8.8
Other	12	3.4	22	6.5
Total	350	100	340	100

Table 2. Grandchildren’s Responses on Contact with and Best Grandparent

<sup>23</sup> “Age and Gender Difference in Grandchildren’s Relationships with their Maternal Grandfathers and Grandmothers.”

The study also hypothesized, “There is no significant relationship between granddaughter’s age and differences in relations with maternal grandparents.”<sup>24</sup> In general, granddaughters continue to have a strong, and often vibrant, relationship with their grandmothers throughout their lives. Grandsons have a natural tendency to move toward a more gender-related relationship with their grandfathers. Granddaughters tend to remain loyal to their grandmothers, and thus, help answer their own questions of intimacy, what about grandchildren who will love me and like me? Who will I feel closest to? We have considered the individual influence of grandfathers and grandmothers. Now, we move to looking at the grand-parenting coin as a whole as we consider “grandparents.”

Gram and Granddad, Memere and Pepre, Popsi and Nana, the Folks...

To finish the first half of this chapter on the influence of grandparents, we now look at seven specific ways that influence-minded grandparents are privileged to have with their grandchildren. We will briefly explore: the influence of effective grand-parenting, de-stressing, un-depressing, presence, bridge-building, being, and doing.

### **Influence of Effective Grandparenting**

Perhaps the best positive-influencing grandparents are those who understand the uniqueness of their role at this stage in their lives and who strive to have the right

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<sup>24</sup> “Age and Gender Difference in Grandchildren’s Relationships with their Maternal Grandfathers and Grandmothers.”

outlook and characteristics. To be a grandparent of influence means to be striving toward being an effective grandparent.

*The Foundation for Grandparenting* conducted a survey of families regarding their opinion of whether grandparents were an indispensable part of their family. Of the subjects interviewed, 77 percent of the subjects interviewed agreed that grandparents were indeed indispensable. An assessment of the qualities and attitudes of the grandparents of these families supplied information that we used to create a model for grandparents who feel that grandparenting is an important symbolic, interactive, and instrumental function of their lives. The following contains some of the qualities that serve as foundation stones for effective grandparenting:<sup>25</sup>

The first quality is simply “being there.” “In Kennedy’s study, a total of 391 young adult grandchildren were questioned about their activities with their grandparents. Data analysis of responses showed sociability and companionship activity to be directly related to a feeling of well-being in the grandchild.”<sup>26</sup>

The second is “altruism.” Altruism means to be “others” oriented. Perhaps, there is no more effective trait to have for the grandparent, but to put the evolving life of the grandchild in their thinking and actions.

Because it is based on ensuring the well being and happiness of family members, an altruistic approach to grandparenting guarantees that family members – and thus the genetic legacy of the grandparent – will in fact survive. Maintaining an altruistic view on life, stressing loving, caring and nurturing as personal values, assures that the quality of relationships within the family will be based on

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<sup>25</sup> “Characteristics of Effective Grandparents” *Foundation for Grandparenting*, accessed May 20, 2015, <http://grandparenting.org/resource/effective-grandparenting/>.

<sup>26</sup> “Characteristics of Effective Grandparents.”

positive and emotional priorities. In short, altruistic grandparents create and support well-functioning families.<sup>27</sup>

The third is “temperament.”

Effective grandparents possess temperamental qualities that are conducive to enhancing interpersonal relationships. Subjects polled frequently mentioned “patience,” the ability to “listen and understand,” and “paying attention” to others as qualities that enhance family relationships. As an important component of personality, temperament can profoundly affect individual grandparenting style and the way grandparents relate to their grandchildren.<sup>28</sup>

The fourth is “personality.” There really is no healthy place for a grumpy grandparent.

Yet personality is important to consider in terms of grandparent development and the way personality affects grandparenting behavior. Grandparents with different personalities can all be effective grandparents. Those who are altruistic can grandparent very effectively because this side of their personality is more important to children than any other aspect.<sup>29</sup>

The fifth is the often misunderstood trait of “vitality.”

The inner spark that makes for a vital grandparent need not reside within an active body. Vital grandparents have a discernible uplifting effect on people. Their energy and enthusiasm spills over and colors everything they do. Vitality is a two-way street. Grandchildren benefit from their grandparents’ vitality, but are also capable of vitalizing their grandparents.<sup>30</sup>

The sixth is “availability.” “Effective grandparents arrange their time so as to be available to their grandchildren. They are aware that physical proximity is important for

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<sup>27</sup> “Characteristics of Effective Grandparents.”

<sup>28</sup> “Characteristics of Effective Grandparents”

<sup>29</sup> “Characteristics of Effective Grandparents”

<sup>30</sup> “Characteristics of Effective Grandparents”

enabling them to spend time with their grandchildren and, when possible, they make an effort to be as nearby as possible for as long a time as possible.”<sup>31</sup>

The seventh is “personal experience and philosophy.” As grandchildren age, many are left with the feeling that they never really took the time to get to know their grandparents as people. Perhaps, it’s just the folly of youth. Still, how many people wish now that they could go back and take the time to really get to know, not just the grandparent, but the real person behind the role.

The eighth is “readiness.” “Ideally, grandparenthood occurs after the grandparents have had a respite from raising their own children and have fulfilled some of their own needs and dreams. It is at that point that they are ready to take up the challenge of finding mental and temporal space in their lives for grandparenting.”<sup>32</sup>

The ninth characteristic is “persistence.” “Effective grandparents are creative in overcoming obstacles that prevent them from being with their grandchildren. Their efforts are usually not lost on their grandchildren.”<sup>33</sup>

Finally, the last is probably one of the most important alongside altruism, “positive parent-grandparent relationships.”

When their children married, they welcomed their new in-law as a new child in the family. These grandparents supported their children’s’ marriages, refrained from destructive and unnecessary criticism and respected family

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<sup>31</sup> “Characteristics of Effective Grandparents”

<sup>32</sup> “Characteristics of Effective Grandparents.”

<sup>33</sup> “Characteristics of Effective Grandparents.”

boundaries. Their grandchildren felt secure because they were spared the stress of loyalty divisions between their parents and grandparents.<sup>34</sup>

The “Foundation for Grandparenting’s” list of these “effective” characteristics is well-thought, and it certainly has the possibility of being a primer for new grandparents to study and seasoned grandparents to consider.

### **De-Stressing**

Grandparents can be influential by serving as “un-stressors” in the family unit.

When considering the fast, stress-filled lives that most families live in our society,

It’s usually the grandparent who provides the supplementary childcare that enables both the parents or the single parent to work. It’s the grandparent who can help when a last minute emergency means a parent needs to be away from home. It’s the grandparent that finds the extra money to buy that certain birthday present...all in all it’s the grandparent who holds the family together.<sup>35</sup>

### **De-Pressing**

Grandparents are also influential in their ability to “de-depress.” Susan A. Ruiz writes in her abstract, “Hierarchical multiple regressions with interaction terms found that greater adhesion with grandparents decreased depressive symptoms, particularly among grandchildren raised in single parent families. However, cohesive grandparent relationships reduced depressive symptoms more in the presence of stronger ties to

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<sup>34</sup> “Characteristics of Effective Grandparents.”

<sup>35</sup> S.V. Bosak, “Grandparents Today,” *The Legacy Project.org*, accessed May 24, 2015. <http://www.tcpnow.com./guides/gptoday.html>.

parents.”<sup>36</sup> Seemingly, there is just something about the collective and collaborative presence of a positive grandparental interaction that helps young people deal with the ups and downs of life.

### **Presence**

Grandparents can be influential in helping a grandchild have a growing feeling of connectedness; or better put, influence of permanent “presence.” In a Dutch study, Verschueren notes, “Young adult grandchildren generally found their grandparents important. Grandparents were valued because they provide their grandchildren with the reassurance of worth and emotional support, and link their lives to the historical past.”<sup>37</sup>

### **Bridge-Building**

Grandparental “bridge-building” is also influential. Story-telling is extremely influential in identity development. The imparting of wisdom and family values from one generation to another provides both grandparents and grandchildren a sense of shared affinity, familial closeness, and life-affirming purpose. Alan Taylor comments:

The stories had much greater impact on young adults' values and attitudes than either their identity development or behaviors. Women shared more

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<sup>36</sup> Sara A. Ruiz and Merrill Silverstein, “Relationships with Grandparents and the Emotional Well-Being of Late Adolescent and Young Adult Grandchildren,” abstract, *Journal of Social Issues* Vol.63, No.4 (2007): 793.

<sup>37</sup> K. Verschueren and N. Van Ranst and A. Marcoen, “Significance of grandparents for young-adult grandchildren,” *Tijdschrift voor Gerontologie en Geriatrie* Vol.24 Issue 1 (Feb. 1993): 3, accessed May 20, 2015, <http://web.a.ebsost.com.proxy.gordonconwell.edu/ehost/detail/detail?vid=52&sid=01fl>.



relationship stories, whereas men most frequently relayed humorous anecdotes. In addition, women indicated stories most often taught them to be appreciative, loving, or courageous, whereas more men shared stories that emphasized having a strong work ethic or being appreciative of and respectful to others.<sup>38</sup>

## Being

Much more could and should be said concerning the place of privilege grandparents hold in being influential in the lives of their grandchildren. Studies have even shown that the influence of “being” by the amount of time spent with grandchildren actually has a positive effect on pro-social behavior in school engagement.<sup>39</sup> Children are better adjusted and better in school.

## Doing

Phillip Chua of the *Asian Journal* sums up the influence of “doing” when he affirms:

The positive impact and benefits children derived from their grandparents, on top of being the extra pair of hands for caring, cooking, diapering, soothing, and babysitting, are as follows: Grandparents provide children a sense of belonging, family continuity, and history. They help reinforce and assure transmission of culture and tradition. They are potential role models, on top of the parents and public idols. Children, especially adolescents, are more comfortable confiding in their grandparents, especially grandmas, and find them more tolerant,

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<sup>38</sup> Alan C. Taylor et al., “Grandma, Tell me Another Story: Family Narratives and Their Impact on Young Adult Development,” abstract, *Marriage & Family Review* Vol.49 Issue 5 (Jul/Aug 2013):367, accessed May 20, 2015, [http://researchgate.net/publication/271932462\\_Grandma\\_Tell\\_me\\_another\\_story\\_family\\_narratives\\_and\\_their\\_impact\\_on\\_young\\_adult\\_development](http://researchgate.net/publication/271932462_Grandma_Tell_me_another_story_family_narratives_and_their_impact_on_young_adult_development).

<sup>39</sup> Shannon Webster, “Grandparents Influence Behavior More than Parents?” *Decoded Science* (December 11, 2011), posted December 2, 2011, accessed June 15, 2015, <http://decodedscience.com/grandparents-influence-behavior-more-than-parents/6912>.

pampering them more than the “disciplinarian” parents. Grandparents are added source of positive boost and self-confidence for the children, who become more ambitious with their future. They provide an extra tier of security by simply being there to soothe. They inspire personality, attitude, and character development and improvement. Grandparents are an added venue for learning values and good manners. They inculcate in the children’s subconscious respect for elders and authority. Children also subconsciously learn from them compassion, fairness, and understanding for others. Grandparents, without conscious efforts, are somehow able to naturally transfuse psychological reassurance and stability to the children; perhaps because children feel their grandparents are “fire extinguishers,” an available added layer of protection for them. Children with living grandparents have been found to gain social enrichment faster and the ability to adjustment to society better, and develop greater sense of humor and tolerance to the realities of life as they grow older. Everything else being equal in a family, the presence of grandparents also lowers risk of adolescent/adult depression and suicide. These, and more, are the reasons why grandparents are indeed valuable and a privilege to have... and should live forever.<sup>40</sup>

Well said. All of the good “general” influence characteristics can and should be a part of not only every grandparent’s life, but how much more in the life of Christian “Grand’s.” The second half of this foundational chapter will now consider Grandparents “spiritual” influence. However, before we begin, a word of observation: there needs to be at least the same commitment to, and focus on, influencing grandchildren spiritually as there is when considering the broader roles of the grandparent. In other words, who one is and what one says need to match. Kids can spot hypocrisy a mile away. Still, all grandparents, including Christian grandparents, are not always “on their game;” everyone has good days and not so good days. However, the idea is consistency. Love your grandchildren, teach them, be involved in their lives and when given the chance,

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<sup>40</sup> Phillip S. Chua, “The Impact of Grandparenting,” *Lifestyle: The Asian Journal*, posted December 4, 2014, accessed June 15, 2015, <http://asianjournal.com/lifestyle/the-impact-of-grandparents/>.

consider taking up the divine mandate to share the most treasured possession one has, faith in Christ.

## **The Spiritual Influence of Grandparents**

### **Today's Role of Christian Grandparents**

Not surprisingly, Christian grandparents, even in the post-Christian era, continue to have tremendous influence in the lives of their grandchildren. In an article in *Christianity Today*, Vern Bengtson states, "Due to increased life expectancy, grandparents today can and want to have a greater religious influence in the lives of their grandchildren. Almost 4 in 10 of the grandchildren were in the same faith tradition as their grandparents."<sup>41</sup> He then points out the fact that many grandchildren experience, but few understand the causes:

However, sometimes there is a 'skipped generation' effect, where grandchildren emulate the faith of a grandparent instead of a parent's example. For instance, we studied the Sabelli family, whose great-grandfather Leo was a warm, charismatic figure. Though his children had rocky marriages and were not strong faith role models, the grandchildren remember him as the strength and rock of the family. Granddaughter Shari Sabelli, now 58 years old, recalls sitting in the pew with her grandpa, a red carnation in his lapel; the same ritual week after week made the church a place where she felt secure. That kind of grandparental influence that reaches back five decades is quite dramatic.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Amy Zietlow, "Religion Runs in the Family," *Christianity Today*, posted September 20, 2013, accessed May 19, 2015, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/august-web-only/religion-runs-in-family.html?start=1>.

<sup>42</sup> Zietlow, "Religion Runs in the Family."

The “skipped generation” is a phenomenon that is complicated to understand. Perhaps, one factor could be that grandparents and grandchildren share the same problem in their lives—the son or daughter and the mom or dad. Still, there seems to be a shared “spiritual connection” between the generations that both grandchild and grandparent enjoy. Susan Bosak points out that, “In an informal AARP survey, 75% of respondents said they wish they could see their grandchildren more often.” She then adds the reason, saying, “To the question ‘What is most satisfying about being a grandparent?’, about 45% said ‘unconditional love’ – without, many added, the burden of having to discipline children. Other popular answers: ‘watching grandchildren grow and develop’, ‘seeing their faces light up when I come in’, and ‘passing on family and religious values.’”<sup>43</sup>

Not only do today’s Christian grandparents enjoy the relationship that they have with their grandchildren, they are more involved in the lives of their grandchildren. *The Journal of Gerontology* points this out: “Overall, the results indicate that religious grandparents are more involved grandparents, and this involvement is explained in part by their generally greater involvement in all types of family and social ties--religious grandparents are more likely to be enmeshed in social ties to others.”<sup>44</sup>

The downside is the glaring reality that, “It is well known that the frequency of contact between grandparents and grandchildren declines when grandchildren get

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<sup>43</sup> S. V. Bosak “Grandparents Today,” *The Legacy Project.org.*, accessed May 24, 2015, <http://www.tcpnow.com/guides/gptoday.html>.

<sup>44</sup> V. King and G.H. Elder Jr., “Are Religious Grandparents More Involved Grandparents?” abstract, *Journal of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences & Social Sciences*. Vol.54, Issue 6 (November 1999): 317.

older.”<sup>45</sup> Understandably so. Yet, it does bring to the forefront the issue of this thesis-project: there needs to be a concerted, committed, and thought-through effort to convey the Gospel message to grandchildren given the precious time that a grandparent does have with them.

One aspect of today’s grandparents making the most of their time with their grandchildren is the need to be visibly Christian in example, and they need to be deliberately church-centered when their grandchildren visit. Church attendance should be done only with the parents understanding and permission. Nevertheless, Craig Fowler makes a case for this in his study when he concludes,

This study analyzes survey responses provided by 195 young adults regarding the kinds of positive and negative social behaviors they experience during interactions with target grandparents. Results suggest that the nature of grandchildren’s evaluations of grandparent behavior and the impact of grandparent behavior on grandchildren’s feelings of relational satisfaction are contingent on feelings of shared familial identification.<sup>46</sup>

If Christ and the church are meaningful to the grandparent, the sharing of those experiences together may serve as a familial bond and a shared affinity between the two.

The conscientious Christian grandparent should also have a seminal understanding of the role of family systems when it comes to the issue of faith development. As an *African American* study points out,

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<sup>45</sup> D. Field and M. Minkler, “Continuity and Change in Social Support between Young-Old, Old-Old, and very Old Adults,” *Journal of Gerontology and Psychological Sciences*, (1998):43-66.

<sup>46</sup> Craig Fowler, “The Role of Shared Family Identity and Future Time Perspective in Shaping the Outcomes of Grandparents’ Positive and Negative Social Behaviors,” abstract, *Journal of Family Communication*. Vol.15, Issue 1, (Jan-March 2015): 20.

It may be useful for parents and grandparents to consider that although religiosity is shaped in important ways by older generations, children within a family (i.e. siblings) also influence each other's faith. Families that help siblings to positively influence each other religiously and spiritually may be more likely to experience the salutary effects of faith life.<sup>47</sup>

Or in other words, a greater spiritual impact may be seen when more than one grandchild is present. Here, little minds and little hearts strengthen the bonds of faith as they witness together the grandparental commitment to Christ and to their church.

So which grandparent holds the most influence? Studies have shown that Christian maternal grandmothers, for reasons explained in the first part of this paper, continue to develop the most meaningful relationships. Yet, even that has waned and has become by and large gender exclusive to granddaughters. On the other hand, the role of Christian grandfathers has regressed tragically and dramatically:

One exception is work by Bengtson and colleagues (2008), which found that grandparents influence their grandchildren's subjective religiosity and religious attendance, but that this influence has declined over the past four decades. By the year 2000, the influence of grandfathers had waned so that only grandmothers had an impact on their grandchildren's service attendance.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ian A. Gutierrez et al., "Religious Socialization in African American Families: The Relative Influence of Parents, Grandparents, and Siblings," *Journal of Family Psychology* 28, No. 6, (February 12, 2014):779 – 789.

<sup>48</sup> V.L. Bengtson and C.E. Copen and N.M. Putney and M. Silverstein, "Religion and Intergenerational Transmission over Time," *Social Structures and Aging individuals: Continuing Challenges*. (New York: Springer Publishing): 304-331.

## Christian Grandfathers

The above statement reflects a church phenomenon that has been apparent since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Men are increasingly absent from the church. Author Leon J. Podles states the seriousness of the situation,

You may have noticed that, in general, men are not as interested in religion as women are. There are usually more women than men at Sunday mass, and there are far more women than men at devotions, retreats, and prayer groups. The men who do come are often there because wives or girlfriends have put pressure on them to attend. In fact, if men speak honestly, they will tell you that men have a general feeling that the Church is for women.<sup>49</sup>

Quoting his book, he then offers three reasons as to why: “Men stay away from the Church because they regard it as a threat to their hard-won masculinity. Second, the Church has become identified with femininity. Feminization has undermined fatherhood.”<sup>50</sup> George Barna offers,

Of Americans in the mid-1990s, “women are twice as likely to attend a church service during any given week.” Women are also 50 percent more likely than men to say they are “religious” and to state that they are “absolutely committed” to the Christian faith.’ The differences seem to be increasing rapidly. In 1992, 43 percent of men attended church; in 1996, only 28 percent.”<sup>51</sup>

The problem this brings to the forefront obviously is, if fathers and grandfathers are neglecting church service, how they are maintaining a healthy, mature Christian walk of faith. And as such, how much will they really be interested in, or feel equipped

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<sup>49</sup> Leon J. Podles, “Missing Fathers of the Church,” *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity Blog*, (January/February 2001) accessed June 16, 2015.

<sup>50</sup> Podles, “Missing Fathers of the Church.”

<sup>51</sup> George Barna, *Index of Leading Spiritual Indicators* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1996), 76.

to, influence their grandchildren (or others for that matter) with the message of the Gospel? Nevertheless, there are men who deeply love the Lord, and although they may have reached the “remnant” status in number concerning church attendance, they still have and cherish their unique role of Christian grandfather.

This can be seen in a letter by Bert Hoeksema, who intended it to be read at his funeral. Addressed to his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren Hoeksema offers Godly instruction and hope for those who were precious to him:

My parting advice is: meditate much in the Word of God, pray without ceasing, listen to His voice, and let Him do the talking. (Jos. 1:8, I Cor. 13, Num. 32:23b, Mat. 6:33, Rom 6:23, Rom. 8:1, Isa. 1:18, John 17:24, I Cor. 15, I Thess. 4:13-18) While we are separated the one from the other I know God will take care of you. He is able to keep you from slipping or falling away, and bring you sinless and perfect into His glorious presence with mighty shouts of everlasting joy. In the meantime I commit each one of you to His kind care and keeping until we meet again, praying that not one of us will be missing in that great family reunion in the sky. “What a day that will be.”<sup>52</sup>

Perhaps the best summary of the role of a Christian grandfather comes from the blog, *A Grandfather’s Heart*:

**WATCH:** A godly grandfather guards his own heart from the lies and corruption of the world so he can effectively lead his own children and grandchildren in the ways of godliness. Our grandchildren want our wisdom and godly counsel when they know our lives are being guided by good choices and wise decisions.

**REMEMBER:** A godly grandfather who watches his life carefully will also be a man who never forgets the goodness and faithfulness of God in both the best of times and the worst of times. A commitment to remember God's faithfulness is a commitment to pay attention to the amazing ways God works in life.

**TEACH:** A godly grandfather wants his grandchildren to know how God has proven Himself faithful and good in his own life as He will in theirs. A grandfather who reflects the Father’s heart will look for every opportunity to

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<sup>52</sup> Barry York, “The Last Letter of a Godly Grandfather,” *Gentle Reformation Blog*, posted November 12, 2012, accessed June 16, 2015, <http://gentlereformation.com/2012/11/12/the-last-letter-of-a-godly-grandfather/>.



teach his children and grandchildren the truth about the greatness of the Father, the depth of His love for them, and His relentless desire for their best. They need to know that obedience to the Father is not limiting, but freeing.

MODEL: A godly grandfather knows that important lessons are more often caught than taught, and so he values the time he has with his grandchildren. He invests himself in his grandchildren with his time and undivided attention. Our grandchildren need and want a grandfather who gives them himself and authentically loves them as our heavenly Father loves us.

May God raise up an army of godly grandfathers who reflect the Father's heart and represent Christ well to the next generations.<sup>53</sup>

### Christian Grandmothers

Family life is like a relay and, grandmother; your grandchildren are standing at the line with their hands reaching back expectantly, eager for you to hand off the truth about the Lord. May you say along with the apostle Paul – I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace. You must run this race with persistence and perseverance all the while praying and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to open the hearts of your grandchildren to accept the truth you relate to them. As a grandmother you can encourage your grandchildren through your love, prayers and example of faith and pass on a rich spiritual heritage to the next generation.<sup>54</sup>

There is a reality that must be faced: grandmothers, at this point in history, are the family key to keeping the Gospel of Christ alive in the hearts of the grandchildren who constitute the current generation, and those who will come. That is a bold statement. However, consider what the *Journal of Comparative Studies* states, "The legacy that grandmothers in particular leave for their grandchildren counters the

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<sup>53</sup> "A Grandfather's Heart," *Christian Grandparenting Blog*, posted June 12, 2010, accessed June 16, 2015, <http://www.christiangrandparenting.net/articles/carry-the-torch/318-a-grandfathers-heart.html#sthash.0YXP1MJv.dpuf>.

<sup>54</sup> Linda Linder, "A Grandmother's Kingdom Work," *Today's Godly Woman Blog*, accessed June 13, 2015, <http://www.chatradio.org/devotion/PrayingGrandmas.htm>.

position of some social scientists that declare and decry the decline of the family's influence over the moral development of children."<sup>55</sup> Copen goes on to another aspect of the religious influence of grandmothers when he declares, "The influence of older generations on the religiosity on grandchildren is greatest when both grandmothers and mothers are consistently strong in their beliefs."<sup>56</sup>

These statements are both encouraging and challenging. They are encouraging in that, with God's grace, at least one gender seems to be stepping up to the plate and keeping their own Christian faith vibrant to the point of influencing their children and grandchildren for the sake of Christ's Kingdom. They are challenging in that the other gender isn't. The obvious losers here are plentiful: the spouse, the grandchildren, and the grandfather himself. A speculative question may ask, "What could the collaborative and concentrated efforts of a dynamic grandparental 'couple' make not only in the lives of the grandchildren of today, but the overall continuance and blossoming of the Christian message of love, forgiveness , eternal life and heaven, for generational to come?"

The admonition, "We, as grandmothers love to give gifts to our grandchildren, however, the greatest and most lasting gift we can give them is to be their prayer

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<sup>55</sup> Casey E. Copen and Merrill Silverstein, "The Transmission of Religious Beliefs across Generations: Do Grandparents Matter?" *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, Vol.39, No.1 (Winter 2008), 59-71.

<sup>56</sup> Copen and Silverstein, "The Transmission of Religious Beliefs across Generations."

intercessor, affecting and imprinting their generation with God's faithfulness," <sup>57</sup> might include an additional intercessory role in praying for God to awaken the faith within the heart of their beloved spouse, the other side of the spiritual grandparent coin.

### Christian Grandparents

How do grandchildren perceive that their grandparents know God? In a John Brown University study of 40 children, the answer was threefold. First, they perceived that their grandparents knew God because they prayed, and prayed a lot. Second, by the stories their grandparents told them over the years, they came to believe that their grandparents knew God on a personal level. Third, the way that their grandparents lived; going to church, emphasizing, talking and sharing things about God with them. <sup>58</sup>

Certainly, the connection between the way that grandparents talk about God, and the way they live out their lives of faith in God, does not go unnoticed by their grandchildren. Perhaps, the best way for grandparents to approach the area of becoming an influencer for the Gospel is to live it and to talk about it.

With that said, the question then is how?

The Christian's instruction for the "Older Men and Women" <sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Lillian Penne, "Grandmothers Spiritual Role Models," *Grandparenting with a Purpose Blog*, accessed June 13, 2015, <http://www.grandparentingwithapurpose.com/2011/08/grandmothers-%E2%80%93-spiritual-role-models/>.

<sup>58</sup> Holly Chatterton Allen and Heidi Schultz, "The Spiritual Influence of Grandparents," *CEJ: Series 3*, Vol.5, No.2 (2008): 346-362, accessed May 23, 2015, <http://Journals.biola.edu/ns/cej/volumes/5/issues/2/articles/346>.

<sup>59</sup> Joseph Miller, "Godly Guidance for Grandparents" *Christian Marriage and Family* (1997) accessed June 13, 2015, <http://www.oocities.org/heartland/plains/8218/grandparent.html>.

...that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate,  
sound in faith, in love, in patience;  
the older women likewise  
that they be reverent in behavior,  
not slanderers, not given to much wine,  
teachers of good things--

Titus 2:2-3

Betty Shannon Cloyd's *Parents & Grandparents as Spiritual Guides* discusses five roles of grandparents in the context of the chapter entitled, "Grandparenting as a Gift."<sup>60</sup> The first role of the Christian grandparent is to be present in the life of the child. Here, she discusses several grandparental situations that one may find oneself in as a grandparent. These are placed within the context that, "The feeling of belonging to a wider family unit helps give security and solidarity in the child's life, and thus in turn helps when the storms of life come."<sup>61</sup> Grandparents can be involved in the life of the grandchild when they live in close proximity. Also, grandparents can strive to see their grandkids on a regularly basis—almost like making a vow, when there is distance between them. Some grands however cannot see grandchildren for reasons such as divorce, or some other schism in the family unit. For these, she emphasizes the need to pray, write, send small gifts, or keep a journal. Another group she addresses is what she terms as "runaway grandparents" or "fun-seeking grandparents." These are those who just don't care to have the ongoing responsibility of pseudo-parenting. Her words to

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<sup>60</sup> Betty Shannon Cloyd, *Parents and Grandparents as Spiritual Guides: Nurturing Children of the Promise*, (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2000), 85-106.

<sup>61</sup> Cloyd, *Parents and Grandparents*, 87.

them are more of a compassionate plea to step up to the plate—your grandchildren need you. The last three situations include grandparents who are in multigenerational households, step-grandparents, and grandparents who are raising their grandchildren alone. For each of these, the call seems to be for God’s sake, for their sake, for your sake—be involved.

The next role Coyle says grandparents have is to love grandchildren unconditionally. “I forgot to let the main thing be the main thing.”<sup>62</sup> She points out that John Westerhoff said, “That we often value children for who or what they can be, instead of who they are right now.”

As grandparents it’s as if we have been given another chance to love unconditionally. Not that we have been given the chance to be a parent; no, that is the parent’s responsibility and we must not interfere with this sacred role. But we do have a chance to love our grandchildren and to love them unconditionally. With God’s help, perhaps we can do a better job this time around.”<sup>63</sup>

She then goes on to emphasize the fact that grandparents do not love by allowing their grandchildren to get away with anything and everything. Part of our love includes incorporating and enforcing parameters and guidelines.

The third role is to connect the generations. Here, the importance of family songs and traditions, stories, and recorded or written family histories were passed along as ideas of “building memories that will last a lifetime.”<sup>64</sup> The fourth role is, perhaps, the most challenging, yet probably the most important: to provide emotional, physical, and

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<sup>62</sup> Cloyd, *Parents and Grandparents*, 91.

<sup>63</sup> Cloyd, *Parents and Grandparents*, 92.

<sup>64</sup> Cloyd, *Parents and Grandparents*, 97.

spiritual support for the parents of our grandchildren. Timely and careful advice, encouraging parents to slow down, words, notes and emails of encouragement, are all a part of being there for and with them as they now take on the role of parenting. Cloyt provides a good word of advice, noting that we rush to give our grandchildren kisses and hugs and our attention: "It is normal for grandparents to have great love for their grandchildren, but we must remember that our own children need our love, respect and attention also."<sup>65</sup>

The last role is that of being a strong spiritual guide for our grandchildren. Coyle states that it's an honor to be a part of what Margaret Guenthur calls "soul-making." "We need spiritual grannies and grandpas who have the time and the wisdom to wait patiently in out-of-the-way places of the spirit and quietly bring new things to birth in others. This is the challenge to all of us who have grandchildren."<sup>66</sup>

### **Summary**

The object of this chapter was to build the foundation for the upcoming chapters as we consider ways grandparents can share the gospel with their grandchildren in an age appropriate manner. Here, the ways that grandparents can and should influence their grandchildren has been considered. In Chapter Three, the age-related cognitive development of grandchildren will be discussed.

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<sup>65</sup> Cloyd, *Parents and Grandparents*, 99.

<sup>66</sup> Cloyd, *Parents and Grandparents*, 101.

The first half of this chapter looked at the influence of grandparents, generally speaking. It provided a brief history of the evolving role of grandparenting, and it addressed the first hurdle of accepting responsibility to be a responsible grandparent. A detailed discussion about the role of grandfathers included a discussion of the roles that grandparents play in helping with value development and the instilling of a strong sense of family. The discussion on the role of grandmothers included a brief examination of seven personality traits of successful grandmothers and seven specific ways of influence in order to be an effective grandmother.

The second half of this chapter focused on the spiritual influence of Christian grandparents. It discussed the “skipped generation,” as well as the call to be Christian and church-centered in example and talk. Finally, the section ended with a look at five specific roles of Christian grandparents: to be present, to offer unconditional love, to connect the generations, to be a support to the parents of the grandchildren and to be a strong spiritual guide in the life of both.

The question is not so much, “Can grandparents be influencing entities?” They have been, are, and will be through most of their lives. The real question is, “How will one go about influencing grandchildren with the things that matter most?” And for the Christian grandparent this should be real food for thought. What shall it profit a man if he gains everything and yet, loses his soul? Perhaps we should ask, “What shall it profit us as grandparents if we gain a grandchild on this earth and do nothing to help them know the way to heaven?”

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Introduction

Grandparents (parent's parents) and grandchildren (children's children) are each part of one another's familial structure that many times has greater, lasting ties than other relationships. Generally speaking, grandparents can have, and many times do have, a great influence in the lives of their grandchildren. This influence was the focus of the first chapter. This chapter considers the biblical commitment that each one must possess as an integral part of God's fashioned family by exploring the biblical foundation and the theological traditions that pertain to the interconnectedness between grandparents and the "skipped generation" grandchildren.

God's quest has always been to form families that have an innate and intentional desire to pass his gospel message from one generation to the next. What does the Bible say about the influence of grandparents on grandchildren? Jim Swanson points out,

Adam had an influence on generations until Noah. Though Jacob and Esau were only 15 when Abraham died, Isaac spent his latter years with Jacob's family long after Joseph was sold into slavery. We are told, "And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees." (Gen 50:23)

In the New Testament we are given the example of Timothy. Paul said, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." (2 Tim 1:5). Though we wonder how Eunice married a Gentile



unbeliever, we see here that a mother and grandmother laid the foundation in Timothy's life that led to his greatness. (Phil 2:20, 22)<sup>1</sup>

This biblical examination of the interaction between grandparents and grandchildren is understood in the light of the four following topics: the responsibility of grandparents toward their grandchildren, the reward in having grandchildren, the reach of grandparents into the future, and the repayment of grandchildren to their grandparents.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Responsibility of Grandparents toward their Grandchildren**

“Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons.”<sup>3</sup> Calvin states in his commentary:

What follows means literally Guard (*custodi*) thyself, and guard thy soul; wherein Moses advances by degrees, reminding them that they needed no common heedfulness, but that they must beware with extreme vigilance and diligence lest they should fail through the want of them; for the slothfulness of the flesh must be spurred on by such instigations as these, and at the same time our weakness must be fortified, and we must take measures against our unsteadfastness; for nothing is more easy than that all our zeal should suddenly be forgotten, or should gradually grow cold. God had established the certainty of His law, as far as was necessary, for the grateful and attentive, yet not without reason does He desire the people to remember how great is the carelessness of men.(sic) Nor does he command those only to remember who were eye-witnesses, but also to

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Swanson. “Fundamentals for the Family: Grandparents,” *The US and Eau Claire Journal*, posted April 27, 2010, accessed June 26, 2015, [http://www.eauclairjournal.com/news/story.phtml/E56954B4/religion/fundamentals\\_for\\_the\\_family-grandparents/archive/](http://www.eauclairjournal.com/news/story.phtml/E56954B4/religion/fundamentals_for_the_family-grandparents/archive/).

<sup>2</sup> “Bible Verses about Grandparents.” *MinTools Blog*, posted September 4, 2014, accessed June 26, 2015, <http://mintools.com/blog/grandparents-bible-verses.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 4:9. All scripture citations are taken from the King James Version (KJV) by Public Domain, unless otherwise noted.

hand down (what they had seen) to their sons and grandsons, that the memory of such remarkable things might be preserved.<sup>4</sup>

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary adds in considering verses 7-9:

What nation is there so great—here he represents their privileges and their duty in such significant and comprehensive terms, as were peculiarly calculated to arrest their attention and engage their interest. The former, their national advantages, are described (De 4:7, 8), and they were twofold: 1. God's readiness to hear and aid them at all times; and 2. the excellence of that religion in which they were instructed, set forth in the "statutes and judgments so righteous" which the Law of Moses contained. Their duty corresponding to these pre-eminent advantages as a people, was also twofold: 1. their own faithful obedience to that law; and 2. their obligation to imbue the minds of the young and rising generation with similar sentiments of reverence and respect for it.<sup>5</sup>

Part of the renewal of the covenantal relationship between God and Moses, and by extension, the children of Israel, was to be mindful, serious, diligent, devoted, and obedient in their relationship with the God who had delivered and chosen them. .

Moses' words have a dual emphasis; have a heartfelt desire to keep the covenant requirements, but also take special interest in passing on the covenant requirements to the generations that will follow them. Moses contends that the *parent* pass on and teach the covenantal promises and requirements. Yet, the text also takes into account his or her aging role of grandparent. In other words, teach it, live it, remember it, and purposely pass it along to every generation that blesses your life; quite a responsibility, but also quite a privilege. How well did they do? Not so good, and perhaps, that is the lesson itself. As Elliot states in His commentary:

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<sup>4</sup> John Calvin. "Calvin's Commentary on the Bible," *Study Light.org*. accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/cal/view.cgi?bk=4&ch=4>.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, "Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary," *Bible Hub*, accessed June, 26, 2015, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/deuteronomy/4-9.htm>.

**Only take heed to thyself.**—the exhortation contained in the following verses lays special emphasis on one point—the worship of the invisible Jehovah without images. This more than anything else would tend to separate the religion of Israel from that of all other nations.

**Teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons.**—a command which Israel evidently failed to obey. For a generation speedily rose up “which knew not Jehovah nor yet the works which he had done for Israel” (Judges 2:10).<sup>6</sup>

They did not do well. Maybe, this should be a heartfelt consideration for modern day grandparents. Still, at least, we see God’s ideal for living a faithful, productive life for everyone’s sake, including God’s. We also see the gentle nature of God the Father to have children, among all people groups, who know about him and who walk with Him. The parents’ inability to fulfill the charge in this narrative does not take away from the meta-narrative of covenant, commitment, courage and God’s incredible compassion as the Old Testament comes to fruition in the New. R.C. Sproul comments, “Deuteronomy stresses the covenantal responsibilities of the parents for their children (6:7, 11:19). This covenantal concern for children continues in the New Testament (Matt 19:14, Acts 2:39, Eph 6:4).”<sup>7</sup>

Sproul’s contention is that the covenantal concern for children should arrest our attention. We should consider whether God is personally interested in people and in their children and their children’s children, or is he more concerned with his agenda and his intention of keeping the agenda moving forward? Matthew 19:14 provides a clue on the heart of the matter when Jesus states, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to

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<sup>6</sup> Charles J. Ellicott. “Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers.” *Bible Hub*, accessed June, 26, 2015, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/deuteronomy/4-9.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> R.C. Sproul, ed., *The Reformation Study Bible* (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015), 259.

come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” This statement occurs within the context of Jesus having a contentious dialog with the Pharisees about the Law and its meaning, and more notably, about the importance of the revelation of God’s nature.<sup>8</sup> The writings of Deuteronomy were “in the air,” as Jesus responded to the disciples who were rebuking those who wanted to bring their children to Jesus to be blessed.<sup>9</sup>

It is as if Jesus goes out of his way to give a living example of why it was important to include children in the original covenant. God longs to love His children, and because of the children of Israel’s original disobedience, the intimacy that was lovingly offered to them was lost. However, Jesus showed them the Father’s ideal. As well, can we not see in Jesus’ actions in the midst of “keeping the covenant” jargon a reflection of the eternal love, concern and value of all children in the eyes of both Covenantal Father and Crucified Son?

Matthew seemingly is echoing the message of Moses; the covenant life that God offers is so valuable that to lack a diligent and wholehearted devotion to it, or to forget it altogether, is not only unconscionable for the parents, but devastating for their children and every generation that follows. When God reached out, his children slapped his hand. Now, in the person of Jesus, God reaches out, and these children are willingly picked up and blessed by him.

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew 19:3-12.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 19:13.

In retrospect, it would seem that both the New Testament and the Old Testament passages are implying the same thing. It would be a tragedy to withhold the greatest offer that God has ever made from those who need to hear and see it, so that they can experience it and live it for themselves. The people of God need to be inclined to pass along this offer to those who come after them, with confidence and compassion. Moses call to “take heed—don’t forget, be serious about this call to covenant,” was for the ancient Israelites, and for the modern parent and grandparent.

A similar point is made in Acts 2:39, at the end of Peter’s speech on the day of Pentecost:<sup>10</sup> “Then Peter said unto them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.’” “The gift Peter is referring to is not only the gift of forgiveness, but also the gift of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>11</sup> Here, the last person of the Trinity joins the refrain in acknowledging the familial aspect of the covenant. Not only does God promise to love and to be faithful to his people, he now comes to be “with” his covenant people and to be “in” them.<sup>12</sup> The Holy Spirit’s presence is not only the

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<sup>10</sup> Acts 2:1-37.

<sup>11</sup> Sproul, *Reformation Study Bible*, 1915.

<sup>12</sup> John 14:17.

“seal” that proves a person has been claimed by and belongs to God,<sup>13</sup> he also comes to give the people of faith a new heart made of flesh and not stone.<sup>14</sup>

Now people can live out their covenant responsibilities because it is done with a heart that wants to, not because one has to. The meta-narrative sees its fruition in the coming of the heart-changing God who loves people so much that he not only reaches out to pick them up, but dwells with them intimately and permanently. God’s ideal, at least for this life, is fully realized. A grandparent’s greatest desire should be not only to see their grandchildren receive the Lord, but to see the fruit of that decision in the changed heart of the budding grand-“child” who loves God and loves the grands who have introduced him to God.

Finally, Paul says in Ephesians, “And, ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”<sup>15</sup> It may be implied that beyond the “instructions” lies the heart of God that started with the alpha instructions in Deuteronomy and now is the omega of God’s call to consider his admonition to encourage children to be included in the covenantal heritage of the past, to live the covenant in the present, and to actively transmit it to their own children in the future. Parents must be zealous to live out their own relationship with God in such a way that they intentionally guide their children and grandchildren to the Well-spring of

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<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 1:13-14.

<sup>14</sup> Ezekiel 11:19.

<sup>15</sup> Ephesians 6:4.

life itself. A Christian grandparent's greatest responsibility to their grandchildren is not to leave a legacy of goods, but a life example of the Gospel.

#### Reward in Having Grandchildren

"Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers."<sup>16</sup> We might include in the glory of the children is the implied allusion to grandparents. Nevertheless, the dual nature of "being a blessing" and "having a blessing" is described in this verse. As Benson points out and makes clear in his commentary:

It is an honor to parents, when they are old, to leave children, and children's children growing up, that tread in the steps of their virtues, and are likely to maintain and advance the reputation of their families, and to serve their generation according to the will of God; *and the glory of children are their fathers* — Namely, fathers that are wise and godly. To have such parents is an honor to children, and to have them continued to them even after they are themselves grown up, and settled in the world. Those are unnatural children indeed who reckon their aged parents a burden to them, and think they live too long; whereas, if children be wise and good, it is their greatest honor, that thereby they are comforts to their parents in the unpleasant days of their old age.<sup>17</sup>

As much as we are inclined most times to only consider and preach that grandchildren are a blessing, this verse considers the often forgotten reality that fathers, mothers, and grandparents are considered blessings as well. As time moves on, the aspect of blessing can become warmly and noticeably reciprocal. As Barnes points

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<sup>16</sup> Proverbs 17:6.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph Benson. "Benson Bible Commentary," *Bible Hub*, accessed June 28, 2015, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/proverbs/17-6.htm>.

out, "The reciprocity of good in sustained family relationships; a long line of children's children is the glory of old age, a long line of ancestors the glory of their descendants."<sup>18</sup> This is the power of true love and familial devotion for those who have witnessed and experienced a caring and committed life within the context of generational and intergenerational relationships.

Gill continues the discussion by connecting the blessings of Jewish grandparenthood within the context of the great desire and delight of the Christian Christ:

Ancient parents. Grandfathers with the Jews are called old men, as Buxtorf (d)<sup>19</sup> observes. A numerous progeny was reckoned a great blessing to a man; to have his table surrounded with children, as olive plants; to be encircled with a large family was a crown of glory (e); and to live to see children's children, a large number of grandchildren, was still a greater glory; and especially, as Jarchi observes, when these children, or children's children, were walking in a good way, in the good ways of religion and godliness, they trained them up in. Christ is the Ancient of days, the everlasting Father; and it is his glory, as Mediator, to see his seed, to have a numerous off spring; and which will endure forever, as the days of heaven: ministers of the Gospel are spiritual fathers; and those who have been converted under their ministry wilt be their joy and "crown of rejoicing" at the last day, 1 Thessalonians 2:19;<sup>20</sup>

This is the "having a blessing" part of grandparents. Gill then picks up the "being a blessing" in the continuing exegesis,

And the glory of children are their fathers; who are wise, as Aben Ezra observes; and righteous, as Jarchi: if they are wise and good men, it is an honor to their children that they descend from them; nor are they ashamed to own their

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<sup>18</sup> Albert Barnes. "Barnes Notes on the Bible." *Bible Hub*, accessed June 28, 2015, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/proverbs/17-6.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> In Lex. Talmud. col. 684. (e) "Te felix natorum turba coronat", Claudian. de Raptu Prosperp. l. 1. v. 109.

<sup>20</sup> John Gill. "Gill's Exposition of the Whole Bible." *Bible Hub*, accessed June 28, 2015, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/proverbs/17-6.htm>.



relation to them, but glory in it, as the Jews did in Abraham, saying, "We have Abraham for our father", Matthew 3:9, Luke 3:8, but, on the contrary, if their fathers are foolish or wicked, their children are ashamed of them, and do not care to acknowledge their descent from them; and such parents, who are an honor to their children, their children should be careful to tread in their steps, that they reflect no dishonor on them; particularly as it is our great honor and glory to have God for our father, to be his adopted sons and daughters, we should be followers of him as dear children, and be obedient ones.<sup>21</sup>

The degree to which both grandparent and grandchild guard and relish one another's role, place, and reputation is quite apparent. Their love for God and for one another moves them to strive to never soil the name or reputation of Jesus in the eyes of the other. This also seems to be the paradigm for the "grand" relationship. For some, if not most, this may seem to be the exception in modern day relationships. In God's eyes, and within the context of a Christian household, this should be the norm. And if it isn't, then the onus falls upon the grandparents to be the example by striving and praying to live up to their end, believing that over time God will grant them the honor that the grandchild will someday relish.

A final thought on the rewards of grand parenting comes in the complex relationship that is described in the context of Paul's first letter to Timothy: "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."<sup>22</sup> Obviously, no greater joy can be had by the Christian parent and grandparent than when one sees God "call" on one of their own. Certainly, the call to proclaim the Gospel

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<sup>21</sup> "Gill's Exposition," accessed June 29, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> 1 Timothy 1:5.

message, to be an example to be emulated, and to walk with Christ for a living and a lifetime outweighs the many heartaches and trials that come with the call to the pastorate. Or as Paul states, “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”<sup>23</sup> In a child’s or grandchild’s call, one is assured not of an ongoing biological progeny, but rather a spiritual one. Souls are at stake—they always have been. And, God has blessed the grandparent with the assurance that others will come to their Christ through the ministry of one who is from the fruit of their loins.

However, what this verse really introduces is the element of hope. Hope exists for the growing place of grandparents whose children or grandchildren may be the product of any of a myriad of dysfunctional or challenging family situations. R. C. Sproul gives the background to the story behind the story in Timothy’s case:

Lois...Eunice. These women are only mentioned here in the New Testament. They were Jewish, unlike Timothy’s father, a Greek, who apparently had not allowed Eunice to have their son circumcised in infancy (Acts 16:1-3). Nonetheless, Timothy had been taught the sacred scriptures “from childhood” (3:15), and the seed of God’s Word had flourished in Timothy’s heart as Paul brought the news of Jesus the Messiah to Lystra.<sup>24</sup>

Timothy was a child from a “mixed” marriage. How many children feel the sting of being a “half-breed,” a “mixed blood,” or a stepchild? Moreover, the challenge to love and cherish a grandchild who is outside of the family bloodline can sometimes be

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<sup>23</sup> Romans 10:14.

<sup>24</sup> Sproul, *Reformation Study Bible*, 2170.

perplexing for grandparents, especially if there are “natural” grandchildren in the family.

Gill makes an interesting observation:

Now when the same faith is said to dwell, first in his grandmother, and in his mother, and in him, this is not to be understood as if this grace was conveyed from one to another by natural generation; for grace comes not that way, only sin; men are not born of blood, but of God; but the sense is, that the same like precious faith was obtained by one, as by another. This was a rich family mercy, and deserved special notice, as being a thing uncommon, and required a particular thanksgiving; and is designed as a motive and encouragement to stir up Timothy to the exercise of that grace, and every other gift God had bestowed upon him, as in the following verse.<sup>25</sup>

It may be helpful to not idealize or idolize our grandchildren to the point that one forgets there is a Christian responsibility that one has to all of them. To have a grandchild, bloodline or not, answer God’s call to a life of serving him, solicits a special admonition to grandparents to consider and take heed to his sovereign choice to have that child of his and grandchild of yours, under your tutelage and influence. From among all the grandchildren, he needs to see the real Christian you--warts and all. She will be the one who will most likely share and teach what she has witnessed in your walk with Christ. He will be the one who will carry on your desire to have the gospel message presented in some manner or form to the rest of your beloved legacy.

So far, we have considered the responsibilities that grandparents have toward their grandchildren and the reward in having grandchildren. Now, we move on to the third topic, the “reach of grandparents into the future generations.”

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<sup>25</sup> “Gill’s Exposition,” accessed June 29, 2015.

## Reach of Grandparents into Future Generations

This section considers three positive reaches that grandparents have into future generations and one negative reach worth noting. The first positive is found in Psalm 37: “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”<sup>26</sup> Gill points out concerning the first half of this verse, “The psalmist makes mention of his age, which takes in the whole compass of his life, to command attention to what he was about to say; which was founded upon a long experience and observation of things,”<sup>27</sup> Grandparents sit at the opposite end of the age spectrum from their grandchildren. What the grandchild fears in the unsettled and unexplored regions of the future, grandparents serve as ageless captains speaking the reality of life as it has been done. Christian grandparents can talk about life—they’ve lived it. They can talk about faith, they have it. More importantly, they can speak directly to the subject of God’s provision and faithfulness. All Christian grandparents have tales to tell of life experiences and how the Lord has provided. Grandchildren are perceptive: if a grandparent walks with Christ, then there is substantive proof of God’s faithfulness. Security in the Lord is one way that grandparents can reach into the future generations. Faith lived is faith displayed. Faith displayed can become faith lived.

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<sup>26</sup> Psalm 37:25.

<sup>27</sup> “Gill’s Exposition,” accessed July 1, 2015.

The second half of the verse, “Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread,” is not a cart blank assurance of only good times and never a hungry stomach. This is not the case. As Barnes points out:

This was a remarkable testimony; and though it cannot be affirmed that the psalmist meant to say literally that he had never, in any instance, met with such a case - for the language may have been intended as a general statement, yet it may have been true to the letter. In the course of a long life it may have occurred that he had never met with such a case - and if so, it was a remarkable proof of the correctness of the general remarks which he was making about the advantage of piety. It is not now universally true that the ‘righteous’ are not ‘forsaken,’ in the sense that they do not want, or in the sense that their children are not constrained to beg their bread, but the following things, are true: (a) that religion tends to make men industrious, economical, and prudent, and hence, tends to promote prosperity, and to secure temporal comforts; (b) that religion ‘of itself’ impoverishes no one, or makes no one the poorer; (c) that religion saves from many of the expenses in life which are produced by vicious indulgence; and (d) that, as a general rule, it saves men and their children from the necessity of public begging, and from the charity-house.<sup>28</sup>

Either way, grandchildren are given practical advice and spiritual insinuations. A spiritual grandparent can explain the need to be both self-sufficient and at the same time totally dependent. These are not two opposite ends of a spectrum, but two sides of the same divinely-minted coin called Christianity. A grandparent can encourage the need for responsibility, while explaining the total and sole-sufficiency of God’s salvific work on the cross. At the same time, they can teach that, “There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord that will stand.”<sup>29</sup> Or, as the Amplified Bible puts it, “Many plans are in a man’s mind, but it is the Lord’s purpose for him that

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<sup>28</sup> Albert Barnes. “Barnes Notes on the Bible.” *Bible Hub*, accessed July 1, 2015, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/37-25.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> Proverbs 19:21.

will stand.” Maybe the message to be shared is simply, “You can count on God---we’re (grandparents) living proof. Our biggest surprise was finding that God was actually interested in being a part of our lives. He has guided us and made our life complete as we have strived to follow him. He will guide your life if you ask. The Bible says, he will not forsake or leave those call upon Him.”<sup>30</sup> A grandchild of any age needs that in their “back pocket” as they venture off into the world. A grandparent needs that firmly grasped in their hands, as they venture towards the time when they will not be there to watch the life of a precious grandchild unfold and take shape.

The second positive verse concerning the reach of grandparents into the future, is in another Psalm: “But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children;”<sup>31</sup> Or, better understood in NIV, “But from everlasting to everlasting, the LORD’s love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children’s children.” R.C. Sproul states, “There is a reciprocal relationship between divine initiative and human response. God first loves his people, then they love Him in return as shown in faithful obedience of their lives (Rom 5:8, 1 John 4:10-12).”<sup>32</sup> Cambridge states:

Men may pass away, but Jehovah’s loving kindness and righteousness, i.e. His covenant faithfulness, endure. The eternity of God is the rock upon which faith can repose in view of the mutability of man. Cp. Psalm 90:1; Psalm 102:12; Psalm

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<sup>30</sup> Hebrews 13:5.

<sup>31</sup> Psalm 103:17.

<sup>32</sup> Sproul, *Reformation Study Bible*, 951.

102:27; Isaiah 40:8. Those who fear Him can securely commit their posterity to His care.<sup>33</sup>

Gill tackles the subject of the “fear” of God and puts it in a context which makes sense:

It reaches from the world past to the world to come, as the Targum; and it is so ‘upon them that fear’ the Lord; not with a servile, but a filial fear; a fear of the Lord and his goodness; which only is consistent with the grace and mercy of God, and a sense of it: not that the fear of God is the cause of mercy or grace; but, on the contrary, grace and mercy are the cause of the fear of God; which is a blessing of the covenant of grace, and one of the first things which appear in conversion; but this properly describes the persons who openly and manifestly share in the grace or mercy of God, and to whom he manifests it yet more and more; nor have any reason to believe they are the objects of it, until the true fear of God is wrought in their hearts; and, besides, this character may be given to show that the mercy and grace of God are not limited to the Israelites only, but belong to such of all nations that fear the Lord.<sup>34</sup>

Matthew Poole adds, “But it is here called righteousness, to intimate that God’s kindness to the posterity of his people is not only an act of his goodness, but also a discharge of his obligation under which he put himself to them, as elsewhere, so Exodus 20:6, to which this place seems to relate.”<sup>35</sup> In coming into a relationship with the Lord, a converted and claimed grandparent can live with the assurance that God will be faithful to their posterity. Will all the grands be converted and walk with God in their lives? Probably not. After all, the maxim, “God has no grandchildren,” means that each

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<sup>33</sup> “Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges,” *Bible Hub*, accessed July 1, 2015, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/103-17.htm>.

<sup>34</sup> “Gill’s Exposition,” accessed July 2, 2015.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew Poole. “Matthew Poole’s Commentary,” *Bible Hub* accessed July 2, 2015, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/103-17.htm>.

generation needs conversation.<sup>36</sup> Yet, there is a sense that God has a special love for those who have come to know him in their lives; and, as such, to their children and children's children. It is not only a covenantal agreement that God is seemingly obligated to fulfill, but it is almost as if he cannot help himself because of the love that was shared between himself and the original believer.

From the moment a grandparent stepped into a life of faith, their own future was eternally secured and they could live life in a way that pleased God and gave purpose and joy to their own. But, they also walked into the future of their children and grandchildren, providing for them an audience and appointment with the God, who in his time and in his way will offer his love, grace, forgiveness, and even faith, to the long-chosen child's child.<sup>37</sup>

The last positive reach that grandparents have into future generations is found in the book of Proverbs: "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just."<sup>38</sup> The Pulpit Commentary, explains the contents:

A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: This would be especially notable where a system of temporal rewards and punishments was expected and generally experienced. The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just: Property unjustly acquired, or wickedly used, is taken from those who have

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<sup>36</sup> R.C. Sproul, "Dust to Glory: Old Testament Teaching Series DVD" *The Monarchy* RLX Media, LLC (1997).

<sup>37</sup> Ephesians 2:8-9.

<sup>38</sup> Proverbs 13:22.



it, and ultimately finds its way into better hands. They cannot keep it, and consequently cannot leave it to their children.<sup>39</sup>

The Pulpit commentary hermeneutics seem good, but too vague for the topic under consideration. A homiletical approach may be more applicable. First, the truth of this verse is understandable and encouraging. A good, God-blessed life can result in material resources that can be passed on to children and grandchildren. Those resources can be helpful and appreciated gifts that reflect the loving sentiments grandparents have toward their grandchildren. In fact, for both Christian and non-Christian grandparents, they represent more than a financial legacy; they exemplify a good work ethic, monetary management, productivity, resourcefulness, and generosity.

Still, a financial legacy is not a spiritual legacy. For the Christian grandparent, there should be a greater “passing-down” than simply the temporal resources and assets that one has accumulated in life. Cindy Jacobs states, “A legacy is a gift or inheritance that lives on after we are gone. As grandparents, God intends for us to leave something that will endure long after we depart this world. How are we to do that?”<sup>40</sup>

She lists five ways to pass your legacy to the next generations:

**First, tell your children and grandchildren your story.**

As you sit around the Thanksgiving table, as you drive in the car on a trip, or as you tuck your kids in bed; tell your family how you first heard about the Lord. Did you always hear your parents talk about God? Or were you in college the first time you met someone who personally knew Jesus Christ? Whether you have walked with the Lord all your life or have just started the journey, share your story with your family. Tell them of the times you struggled with the Lord as well

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<sup>39</sup> H.D.M. Spence-Jones. “The Pulpit Commentary,” *Bible Hub*, accessed July 2, 2015, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/proverbs/13-22.htm>.

<sup>40</sup> Cindy Jacobs, “Leaving a Legacy” *Pass the Legacy Blog*, posted May 20, 2013, accessed July 2, 2015, <https://passthelegacy.wordpress.com/category/grandparenting/>.

as let them know of the victories God has had in your life. As you communicate your tales of truth, you will be teaching on the 'stage of life' about the ways, works and Words of God. You are passing a legacy of God's faithfulness to the next generations.

**Next, build warm memories with your family.**

We want our grandchildren to remember the time that they spent with us. So, be intentional and do things to imprint their hearts. These memories can be simple things — like always 'bless' them before they leave. Or every night they are in your home, kneel beside the bed and say a prayer together. Strategically transform common, even painful events, into powerful, pleasant memories by modeling godly character and a positive attitude. These positive memories will be an anchor to truth in their adulthood.

**'Three, is a magic number' – Create meaningful traditions.**

In today's turbulent world, it is important for children to have security and stability. Regular and unique customs provide a beautiful backdrop of stability that enhances their outlook and appreciation for life. Our consistency sends a message that says three very important things: 'You are loved, valued and special.'

**Four, Encourage deeper walks with the Lord!**

Read God's Word to them on a regular basis. Tell them stories of the heroes of the faith. Pray with your family and let them know you are praying for them consistently. Share your heart's desire that one day you want everyone to be together in the Kingdom of God with 'no child left behind.' Let them know that it is not as important as to what you do in life. Rather, it is important as to who you are in Christ!!!

**Finally, speak words of affirmation into your family.**

No one can give encouragement like a grandma! When we speak words of support and unconditional love, we bolster their self-esteem and empower them toward maturity. Tell them how smart and talented they are and what bright futures you see for them. Watch their faces light up, soaking in every word! These are powerful ways to leave a strong spiritual legacy for your family. And by doing so, you are connecting the hearts of your loved ones with the heart of their Heavenly Father.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Jacobs, "Leaving a Legacy," accessed July 2, 2015.

The three positive reaches that a grandparent has in reaching into future generations can be summed up accordingly: Psalm 37:25 teaches the message of security in life and for life. Grandparents are living examples of a secure life to their grandchildren. Psalm 103:17 teaches the faithfulness of God in calling, keeping, and walking with those who come to know Him. Grandparents provide a living and breathing example of a commitment to and the faithfulness of God to their grandchildren. Proverbs 13:22 teaches about the godly inheritance that the grandparents have deliberately and prayerfully left for the grandchildren to consider.

The last reach into future generations is more in a negative vein. It has to do with the grandparents perplexing, but solemn, responsibility for their grandchildren to take God and God's intentions and offers seriously. Exodus 34:6-7 sets the scene:

The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

This is Moses' response to the Lord passing before him as he had asked. Elliot explains,

Moses was, no doubt, hidden and protected by God's hand in a "cleft of the rock" while God's glory passed by. He was only allowed to look out from his hiding-place after the glory had passed, when he saw the remains of it—the "back parts;" even this was, however, so brilliant a vision that it left a permanent light upon his countenance, which he was fain ordinarily to conceal from the people by means of a veil (Exodus 34:29-35).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> "Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers." *Bible Hub*, accessed July 2, 2015, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/exodus/34-6.htm>.

The truth of God's goodness and grace are on the lips of one who knew God intimately. The warning spoken to the wicked was also serious and on the lips of one who again knew God intimately. As Benson points out, "The expression intimates, that however merciful and forgiving God is toward the penitent, yet he will not suffer his honor and authority to be trampled upon by those who wantonly abuse his lenity and forbearance."<sup>43</sup>

The last thing that grandchildren of any age need is a watered-down, sugar-coated gospel with a sissy Savoir and milquetoast God. The next to the last thing a grandchild needs is a universalist-believing, pluralistic-encouraging, syncretistic-minded pseudo-Christian grandparent who knows about God, but who does not really, intimately, know God. As Christian grandparents, our role is too important to just "wing it" with our grandchildren when they ask about God—"All religions are the same...Just be a good person..., Try your best..., you'll have to ask the Man upstairs...."

Grandchildren are looking for "proof in the pudding" grandparents when it comes to a relationship with God. They want and need to hear the old, old story of Jesus and His love. Grands should not be content to point them to "religion," but rather, should tell them about Christ. In other words, Christian grandparents are not given the liberty to play religious hide-and-seek with their grandchildren out of fear of rejection or feeling that it's "not my place."

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<sup>43</sup> "Benson's Commentary," *Bible Hub*, accessed July 2, 2015, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/exodus/34-6.htm>.

Granted, grandparents should always be clear about their desire to discuss religious subjects with their grandchildren's parents. They should seek a parent's approval to share matters of the faith. But in a sense, you talk what you live, and even if parents are hesitant or even hostile, one can always be creative in finding ways to spiritually influence their grandchildren. If nothing else, a house decorated with images and symbols of the Christian faith can speak silently, yet powerfully, in the heart of the grandchild.

A closing thought concerning Moses' words of blessings and warning is simply that these verses speak about the consequences of unbelief by unbelievers. Their lifestyles and words can set in motion cyclical tendencies, attitudes, and actions that can literally be the downfall of generation upon generation. This is the warning, "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." There may be seen a sideways reference and warning to believing grandparents as well: Do not take the grace of God in your life, or his choice of you to be his instrument in keeping and spreading the gospel message to each generation, lightly. People's destinies are at stake. Grandparents have the privilege and responsibility to be a part in God's ongoing reach into the lives of future generations. If God can allow calamity for generation upon generation for those who refuse to know and walk with Him, how much more his *ideal* of being and bringing a blessing to the third and fourth generation to those who know, love and walk with him now. His grace and goodness should always be in our hearts and minds. Finally, we

come to the reciprocal nature of the grandparent/grandchild relationship as now we consider the repayment of grandchildren to their grandparents.

### The Repayment of Grandchildren to their Grandparents

Paul wrote these words to Timothy: “But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.”<sup>44</sup> Or, as the NIV makes clearer: “But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.” Jamieson exegetes the verse:

*If any widow have children*—not ‘a widow indeed,’ as having children who ought to support her. *Nephews*—rather, as Greek, ‘descendants,’ or ‘grandchildren’ [Hesychius]. ‘Nephews’ in old English meant ‘grandchildren’ [Hooker, Ecclesiastical Polity, 5.20]. *Let them*—the children and descendants. *Learn first*—ere it falls to the Church to support them. *To show piety at home*—filial piety towards their widowed mother or grandmother, by giving her sustenance. Literally, ‘to show piety towards their own house.’ ‘Piety’ is applied to the reverential discharge of filial duties; as the parental relation is the earthly representation of God our heavenly Father’s relation to us. ‘Their own’ stands in opposition to the Church, in relation to which the widow is comparatively a stranger. She has a claim on her own children, prior to her claim on the Church; let them fulfill this prior claim which she has on them, by sustaining her and not burdening the Church. *Parents*—Greek, (living) ‘progenitors,’ that is, their mother or grandmother, as the case may be. ‘Let them learn,’ implies that abuses of this kind had crept into the Church, widows claiming Church support though they had children or grandchildren able to support them.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> 1 Timothy 5:4.

<sup>45</sup> “Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary.” *Bible Hub*, accessed July 4, 2015, [http://biblehub.com/commentaries/1\\_timothy/5-4.htm](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_timothy/5-4.htm).

As the text implies, the mark of a true Christian family is a commitment to live out the godly life of caring and compassion that extends to all in the household members, and to not dream of letting the aged be a burden to others, but to be seen as the normative role of patriarch or matriarch of the family who are to be cared for and loved as much as the newborn. The grands, like the newborn, are not at the age of producing income for the family, but both add value, worth, joy, purpose, and hope.

The Pulpit commentary begins to clearly show the reciprocal nature between generations:

To *requite* (ἀμοιβὰς ἀποδίδοναι); literally, to give back the return or exchange due. Ἀμοιβή is only found here in the New Testament, but is not uncommon in the LXX, and is much used in the best classical authors. The πρόγονοι had nourished and cared for them in their childhood; they must requite that care by honoring and supporting them in their old age.<sup>46</sup>

These verses speak not only of the care of family, but the often forgotten honor that is due the elder generation. Providing for grandparents should be not a question of whether we can feed another mouth, but rather, a godly privilege to be willingly and dutifully undertaken.

### **Grandparents and Grandchildren: Theological Traditions**

We move now past the biblical mandate concerning grandparents and grandchildren in the wondrous process of sharing “the faith,” to briefly discuss the idea of precedence. Both the ancient Hebrew culture of the Old Testament and the Christian

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<sup>46</sup>“The Pulpit Commentary.” *Bible Hub*, accessed July 5, 2015, [http://biblehub.com/commentaries/1\\_timothy/5-4.htm](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_timothy/5-4.htm).

culture of the New Testament were family-centered. Thus, at least in early ages of children, both took great pains to educate and influence their children and grandchildren in the ways of scriptural instruction. In those formative early years, grandparents played important, if not integral, roles in the process. As Baker points out, "The primary agency of education in both ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia was the home. Parents and elders of the clan or extended family were responsible for the education of children."<sup>47</sup>

### Religious Education in the Hebrew Culture of the Old Testament

What was it that was to be taught or handed down to the next generation?

Holman provides a brief overall description:

The primary purpose of education among the Jews was the learning of and obedience to the law of God, the Torah. Whereas the word 'torah' can be used to refer to all Jewish beliefs, it generally refers to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The secondary purpose in education was to teach about the practical aspects of everyday life: a trade for the boy and the care of the house, application of dietary laws and how to be a good wife for the girl.<sup>48</sup>

Initially, both mother and father had specific educational roles and duties as

Elizabeth Youmans explains:

Mother's Role: The first education was necessarily the mother's responsibility.

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<sup>47</sup> "Education in Biblical Times." *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology Online*, accessed July 7, 2015, <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/education-in-bible-times.html>.

<sup>48</sup> "Education in Biblical Times." *Holman Bible Studies*, accessed July 7, 2015, <http://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/hbd/view.cgi?number=T1737>.



- a. Nurturer: Infancy in Israel was a prolonged state of nurture. Babies nursed for three years.
- b. Teach the domestic rites and songs of the weekly festivals, feasts, and the annual festival.

Edersheim (Messiah, p. 121) states that children were given careful training of the memory before the age of three. By the time the child was three, formal homeschooling was begun in the form of memorizing Scripture, benedictions, and wise sayings. Mnemonic rules were devised to help the child retain what he memorized. Each child had a guardian promise that he inserted in his daily prayers. The earliest hymns taught would be the Psalms for the days of the week, or festive Psalms, such as 113-118.

Father's Role: It was the father who was 'bound to teach his son' (Kidd. 29a). The LORD said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him' (Genesis 18:17-19). For the Jewish father, 'to impart to the child knowledge of the Torah conferred as great a spiritual distinction, as if the man had received the Law itself on Mount Horeb' (Sanhedrin 99b). The Book of Proverbs gives us the deepest insights into the social and family life of the Old Testament dispensation. To the Jew, child-life was considered peculiarly holy, and the duty of filling it with thoughts of God especially sacred.<sup>49</sup>

Jewish grandparental contributions in the educational process were substantial during the early years of the grandchild's process of instruction. However, as children grew older, tutors or schools began to be more of an integral educational part in the child's life.

Owing to the primacy of ritual in traditional Judaism, instruction of children focused on the attainment of ritual literacy as its central goal. In the Talmudic era, boys attended elementary school or studied with a tutor from the age of five, six, or seven until the age of twelve or thirteen. School children learned to

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<sup>49</sup> Elizabeth Youmans, "Early Hebrew Education," *Chrysalis International*, accessed July 7, 2015, [www.chrysalisinternational.org/files/Early\\_Hebrew\\_Education.2.pdf](http://www.chrysalisinternational.org/files/Early_Hebrew_Education.2.pdf).

read the Torah and to write; at age twelve they studied *Mishnah*. A network of schools operated in the Land of Israel by part of the second century. Girls were, by and large, excluded from the elementary schools.<sup>50</sup>

Holman adds:

Girls received their education at home. A girl's mother taught her what she needed to know to be a good wife and mother. She learned about such things as dietary laws which had to do with the family's devotion to God. Girls learned the practical side of the laws the boys studied. A girl learned how to make the home ready for special holidays and Sabbath. In such preparation she learned the meaning of the customs and history behind the events. This heritage she would be able to pass on to her own children in their very early years.<sup>51</sup>

The handing down of traditions was well established in the hearts and minds of

people, including children and grandchildren, parents and grandparents. The emphasis on passing down traditions still continues in the Hebrew culture as can be seen in the

*Pesach*, or Passover, teaching in *The Reform-Judaism. Org*. Here in step five of fifteen a child takes part in the ritual:

Magid: The Story. A retelling of the story of the Exodus from Egypt and the first Pesach. This begins with the youngest person asking The Four Questions, a set of questions about the proceedings designed to encourage participation in the Seder. The Magid is designed to satisfy the needs of four different types of people: the wise one, who wants to know the technical details; the wicked one, who excludes himself (and learns the penalty for doing so); the simple one, who needs to know the basics; and the one who is unable to ask, who doesn't even know enough to know what he needs to know. At the end of the Magid, a blessing is recited over the second cup of wine and it is drunk.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> "Judaism; Conceptions of Childhood, Care of Children, Discipline, Education," *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*, accessed July 7, 2015, <http://www.faqs.org/childhood/In-Ke/Judaism.html>.

<sup>51</sup> "Education in Biblical Times," *Holman Bible Studies*, accessed July 2, 2015.

<sup>52</sup> "Passover: Customs and Rituals." *ReformJudaism.org. blog*, accessed July 7, 2015, <http://www.reformjudaism.org/passover-customs-and-rituals#sthash.6lWY4rZE.dpuf>.

## Religious Education in the Christian Culture of the New Testament

Carolyn Osiek, sums up the Christian family in the first three centuries:

They were rigidly monotheistic, which must have made them, like the Jews, seem odd. They frequented the markets, the baths, the shops, the neighborhood streets. Their children continued to attend the same schools and to learn from the same Greco Roman literary models. Christians kept up their relationships with non-believing neighbors and friends. Yet a clear sense of a distinct identity was emerging, an identity that found expression in such ideas as heavenly citizenship, new race, and the analogy of soul (Christians) to body (world).<sup>53</sup>

But what of the process of handing down traditions that the Jews had been doing so well and now it was the Christian turn to begin to do the same, albeit with a “fulfilled” message? Holman explains,

No formal educational approach is described in the New Testament. However, Jesus is pictured as teaching large crowds (Mark 4:1-2 ). While Jesus was much more than a teacher, he was recognized as a teacher by his contemporaries. He was a God-sent teacher who taught with an authority and challenge which held his audiences captive. Jesus was also a trainer of teachers. He selected the twelve and taught them how to teach others. As risen Lord, Jesus commissioned his followers to carry their evangelism and teaching ministry into all the world (Matthew 28:19-20 ). As seen in Acts 2:42 , Acts 4:1-2; Acts 5:21, Acts 5:21,5:28 , teaching became an important work in the early church in Jerusalem. The New Testament places importance on the teaching function of the church. Teaching is regarded as a primary function of the pastor (1 Timothy 3:2 ). Volunteer teachers are also important to the work of the church (James 3:1 ). In New Testament times churches met in the homes of members and Christian teaching was done there (Romans 16:3-5 ). While the synagogue school still existed, the home was still considered a primary place of education for children. Timothy is a notable example of a child who had been educated in the Scriptures in the home.<sup>54</sup>

We can assume that early on that at the beginning of the Christian era:

Much of the New Testament understanding of education is simply assumed from the practice of the Old Testament and Judaism. For example, the family remains

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<sup>53</sup> Carolyn Osiek, “The Family in Early Christianity: Family Values Revisited,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 58, (1996):13, accessed July 7, 2015, <http://www.lasalle.edu/~dolan/2003/Osiek.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> “Education in Biblical Times,” *Holman Bible Studies*, accessed July 2, 2015.

the primary context for education, with prominence also given to the church as the extended family or community of faith. Likewise, the goal of educating the whole person, mind and character, carries over from Hebrew practice in the Old Testament. Even the methodology of both instilling information and drawing out or developing the innate talents and abilities of the student finds its antecedent in the Old Testament.

The New Testament focuses its attention on educating the whole person (intellect, emotions, and will), educating through personal relationship (i.e., the mentoring relationship of teacher and disciple), the process of both instilling knowledge and encouraging learning through discovery, and educating through experiential learning. Especially important theologically are the truths of educating the whole person (so that intellectual knowledge is applied to personal behavior James 1:25; 1 John 2:2-6 ); and the work of God's Spirit in illuminating the learner as he or she is instructed in the faith ( John 16:5-15 ; 1 John 2:26-27 ).<sup>55</sup>

Even so, as Christianity continued to spread throughout the Mesopotamian world in first three centuries, the church slowly began to outgrow its Hebrew identity. Thus, the church wrestled with its ability to have well-defined educational processes and procedures.

Although children were accepted as part of the early church, there were no Christian educational programs for children. There were classes for catechumens or those wishing to join the church, but no specific classes or schools for children. In part this was due to the poverty of the early church and the persecution the church endured for the first centuries. And there was the conviction that such training was primarily the responsibility of the parents.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, we can assume that by God's grace, parents and grandparents still held, and now maybe even to a greater extent, a great influence in the passing on of faith traditions and rituals to their children and grandchildren.

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<sup>55</sup> "Education in Biblical Times." *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology Online*, accessed July 2, 2015.

<sup>56</sup> Diane Severance, "Jesus Loved Children," *Christianity.Com blog*, accessed July 7, 2015, <http://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1-300/jesus-loved-children-11629553.html>.

Today, in the United States, the Hartford Institute estimates there are roughly 350,000 religious congregations in the United States; of those, about 314,000 are Protestant and other Christian churches, and 24,000 are Catholic and Orthodox churches. Non-Christian religious congregations are estimated at about 12,000. About 20.4% of Americans (approximately 63 million in 2010) attend the nation's 350,000 congregations weekly.<sup>57</sup> As of 2010, (79.5%) of the population, or approximately 247 million Christians live in the United States.<sup>58</sup> This shows that Christianity has been successfully passed down through the years. The biggest difference is the modern day shift from multigenerational households to nuclear families.

A topic of growing interest is that of multigenerational families—defined here as family households consisting of three or more generations. In 2000, 3.7 percent of households in the United States were multi- generational. By 2010, multigenerational households increased to 4.0 percent. Multigenerational households may be more likely to reside in areas where new immigrants live with their relatives, in areas where housing shortages or high costs force families to double up their living arrangements, or in areas that have relatively high percentages of children born to unmarried mothers who live with their children in their parents' homes.<sup>59</sup>

The facts speak for themselves: 96% of families are no longer in a multigenerational household. Grandparents and grandchildren live separately, and less

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<sup>57</sup> "Fast Facts about American Religion." *Hartford Institute of Religious Research*, accessed July 7, 2015, [http://hirr.hartsem.edu/research/fastfacts/fast\\_facts.html](http://hirr.hartsem.edu/research/fastfacts/fast_facts.html).

<sup>58</sup> "Christianity Today: General Statistics and Facts of Christianity, *About Religion*, accessed July 7, 2015, <http://christianity.about.com/od/denominations/p/christiantoday.htm>.

<sup>59</sup> "American Community Survey Briefs: Multigenerational Households," *U.S. Census Bureau census.gov*, assessed July 8, 2015, [www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/acsbr11-03.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/acsbr11-03.pdf).

time is available for the passing along of faith traditions. Multigenerational families were pretty much the norm until the second half of the twentieth and the early years of the twenty-first century. From this thesis-project's perspective, the critical need seems to be for grandparents in every kind of familial setting to be more deliberate and to make the most of family times together in one's quest to continue to pass along the greatest heavenly treasure that a Christian grandparent has, his or her faith in Christ, to their greatest earthly treasure, their grandchildren.

### **Summary**

The final outcome of this thesis-project is a handbook for grandparents to share their faith with their grandchildren in an age appropriate way. Thus, the first chapter explored the general and spiritual influence of grandparents in the lives of their grandchildren. The question under consideration was, "Do grandparents have a special amount of influence in the lives of their grandchildren?" The researched answer, barring the many mitigating circumstances, seems to be yes. In other words there is a justification in considering the mere fact that grandparents can share the gospel with a reasonable assurance that grandchildren will benefit.

This chapter has attempted to consider the biblical and theological foundations for using the above mentioned influence in the lives of one's grandchildren. Scripture provides the biblical mandate to pass along the faith. This is evident when one considers the responsibilities that grandparents have toward their grandchildren, the

reward in having grandchildren, the reach of grandparents into the future generations and the repayment of grandchildren to their grandparents.

The second issue explored was the traditional precedence. The transmission of the faith was explored in the early Hebrew and Christian cultures, with a modern day look at each. The overall question under consideration was, “Should grandparents use their relationship to spiritually influence the lives of their grandchildren?” The researched answer in both issues is yes, definitely. The biblical benefits are reciprocal, a blessing to both grandparent and grandchild.

Looking ahead, the next chapter will try to answer some “what” questions. What is needed to be effective in using one’s influence to convey the gospel to one’s grandchildren? What level of understanding must I have about the age of each grandchild? What tools are available? What techniques can be employed? What material can be used? How can one open up a conversation with a grandchild? Chapter Four will answer the “how” question by means of the handbook. The project’s effectiveness will be evaluated in the final chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LITERARY REVIEW

#### Introduction

Chapter one of this thesis-project concentrated on the influence of grandparents in the life of their grandchildren. Chapter two considered the biblical mandate and traditional precedence of using grandparental influence for spiritual purposes. Now, in this chapter we will move from considering grandparents to exploring grandchildren. It will explore four schools of thought regarding the development of children at various ages including Erik Erikson's psychosocial, Jean Piaget's cognitive, Lawrence Kohlberg's moral, and James Fowler's faith. Next, the discussion will focus on communicating with children at different ages. The final section will provide a brief examination of religious objects and symbols, and a more in-depth look into six current "primary" gospel tools.

#### The Developing Grandchild

##### Infants (Ages: 0-2)

Approximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
0-2 years	Hope	Basic trust vs. mistrust	Mother	Can I trust the world?	Feeding, abandonment

Table 3. Erik Erickson's Psychosocial Development



“Learning Basic Trust Versus Basic Mistrust (Hope): Chronologically, this is the period of infancy through the first one or two years of life. The child, well-handled, nurtured, and loved, develops trust and security and a basic optimism. Badly handled, he becomes insecure and mistrustful.”<sup>1</sup> Or, as Saul McLeod points out:

Is the world a safe place or is it full of unpredictable events and accidents waiting to happen? Erikson's first psychosocial crisis occurs during the first year or so of life (like Freud's oral stage of psychosexual development). The crisis is one of trust vs. mistrust. During this stage the infant is uncertain about the world in which they live. To resolve these feelings of uncertainty the infant looks towards their primary caregiver for stability and consistency of care. If the care the infant receives is consistent, predictable and reliable they will develop a sense of trust which will carry with them to other relationships, and they will be able to feel secure even when threatened. Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of hope. By developing a sense of trust, the infant can have hope that as new crises arise, there is a real possibility that other people will be there are a source of support. Failing to acquire the virtue of hope will lead to the development of fear. For example, if the care has been harsh or inconsistent, unpredictable and unreliable then the infant will develop a sense of mistrust and will not have confidence in the world around them or in their abilities to influence events. This infant will carry the basic sense of mistrust with them to other relationships. It may result in anxiety, heightened insecurities, and an over feeling of mistrust in the world around them.<sup>2</sup>

The above developmental chart implies that the virtue of hope and a trusting outlook toward life seem to be positive facets to which the Christian grandparent can easily help to instill within the young infant's life. The existential question, “Can I trust the world?” can be answered not only by the mother, but by the external family

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<sup>1</sup> “Erikson's Eight Stages of Development,” *Child Development Institute*, accessed July 15, 2015, <http://childdevelopmentinfo.com/child-development/erickson/>.

<sup>2</sup> Saul McLeod, “Erik Erikson,” *Simply Psychology* 2013, accessed July 15, 2015, <http://www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html>.

members as they meet the infant's needs, cuddling and speaking soothingly to the baby. These activities often come natural to grandparents, but in a real way they set the stage for the baby to move from a limited view of parental love and care to an understanding of a larger world in which love can be found and experienced beyond the nuclear family, and where the existence of a good, loving and caring God can someday be assumed.

In the Infant Stage, we also find cognitive development occurring as the infant learns through experience. Piaget's take on the infant is seen in his sensorimotor state of cognitive development which says,

In this period (which has 6 stages), intelligence is demonstrated through motor activity without the use of symbols. Knowledge of the world is limited (but developing) because it's based on physical interactions / experiences. Children acquire object permanence at about 7 months of age (memory). Physical development (mobility) allows the child to begin developing new intellectual abilities. Some symbolic (language) abilities are developed at the end of this stage.<sup>3</sup>

This is the stage of squirming, screaming and serious crying. Yet, this is also the stage in which play, song, and smiles can be eventually mixed with words such as, "I love you," or for our purposes, "God loves you." As the infant learns through experience, grandparents obviously have their hands full—so do parents. Yet, grands can and do exemplify "another" besides parents who seemingly cherish and dote over them. A cherished child who is an object of unconditional love should be able to apply that reality as he or she is taught and exposed to the teaching of Scripture and the person of Jesus.

Discussing moral development in infants, Kohlberg would probably point only to a very early level one stage in which, "Our moral code is shaped by the standards of

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<sup>3</sup> W. Huitt and J. Hummel, "Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development," *Educational Psychology Interactive*, accessed July 15, 2015, <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/cognition/piaget.html>.

adults and the consequences of following or breaking the rules.”<sup>4</sup> Fowler would place faith development in infants at Stage 0: “Undifferentiated (Primal) Faith (Infancy). The earliest faith is the fund of basic trust and hope in the care of others. Undifferentiated faith experience of infancy is built upon secure attachments. A caregiver’s nurturance, protection, and availability provide the basis for the earliest grasp of divine care.”<sup>5</sup>

#### Toddlers (Ages 2-4)

Approximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
2–4 years	Will	Autonomy vs. shame and doubt	Parents	Is it okay to be me?	Toilet training, clothing themselves

Table 4. Erik Erickson Psychosocial Development

Erickson believes that the second psychosocial crisis, learning autonomy *versus* shame (will), occurs during early childhood, between 18 months or 2 years and 3½ to 4 years of age. The “well-parented” child emerges from this stage sure of himself, elated with his new-found control, and proud rather than ashamed. However, autonomy is not entirely synonymous with assured self-possession, initiative, and independence, but includes stormy self-will, tantrums, stubbornness, and negativism, at least for children in the early part of this psychosocial crisis. For example, one sees many toddlers resolutely

<sup>4</sup> Saul McLeod, “Kohlberg,” *Simply Psychology* 2013, accessed July 15, 2015, <http://www.simplypsychology.org/kohlberg.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Ross A. Thompson and Brady Randall, eds. Arlene Andrews and Natalie Kaufman. “Implementing the U.N. Convention to the Rights of children. A Standard of Living for Development,” accessed July 16, 2015, [http://www.desmos.info/en/doc/Childrens\\_Spiritual\\_Development.pdf](http://www.desmos.info/en/doc/Childrens_Spiritual_Development.pdf).

folding their arms to prevent their mothers from holding their hands as they cross the street. Also, the sound of "NO" rings through the house and the grocery store.<sup>6</sup>

McLeod observes:

The child is developing physically and becoming more mobile. Between the ages of 18 months and three, children begin to assert their independence, by walking away from their mother, picking which toy to play with, and making choices about what they like to wear, to eat, etc.

The child is discovering that he or she has many skills and abilities, such as putting on clothes and shoes, playing with toys etc. Such skills illustrate the child's growing sense of independence and autonomy. Erikson states it is critical that parents allow their children to explore the limits of their abilities within an encouraging environment which is tolerant of failure.

For example, rather than put on a child's clothes a supportive parent should have the patience to allow the child to try until they succeed or ask for assistance.

So, the parents need to encourage the child to becoming more independent whilst at the same time protecting the child so that constant failure is avoided.

A delicate balance is required from the parent.... they must try not to do everything for the child but if the child fails at a particular task they must not criticize the child for failures and accidents (particularly when toilet training). The aim has to be "self-control without a loss of self-esteem" (Gross, 1992). Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of will.

If children in this stage are encouraged and supported in their increased independence, they become more confident and secure in their own ability to survive in the world.

If children are criticized, overly controlled, or not given the opportunity to assert themselves, they begin to feel inadequate in their ability to survive, and may then become overly dependent upon others, lack self-esteem, and feel a sense of shame or doubt in their own abilities.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "Erikson's Eight Stages of Development," *Child Development Institute*.

<sup>7</sup> Saul McLeod, "Erik Erikson," *Simply Psychology*.

Grands should work to understand that the terrific toddler going through the terrible two's is still the sweet baby who, until recently, simply needed to be held, cuddled, fed, and loved. As expected, the little autonomous hell-raiser has arrived! The virtue being developed is the will, and most 2-year-old's willpower can often challenge and outlast that of their parents. Children at this age need some space to explore and to be encouraged. Of course, grands want to control and be fearful and fret-filled over the toddler. Throw in the will power, and many grands are tempted to throw in the towel. This may be the easiest response, but it is not the healthiest response for all concerned.

Simple activities such as putting together Jigsaw puzzles, reading books, painting pictures, and playing with dough or clay, or building with construction toys, drawing, playing make believe and memory games, are other ways to keep a 2-4 year old busy learning and a grandparent anxiety free. As Kate Cronan says, "Making her (Grandchild) own fun is part of creative thinking and her problem solving, so let her play freely as long as she is not being destructive or getting into danger."<sup>8</sup>

In addition, nap time storytelling may be needed to enhance the imagination and to keep the little one still for a time. This can be a great time to introduce the great God

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<sup>8</sup> Carol Cooper, Claire Halsey, Su Laurent and Karen Sullivan, *Growing Up! A Parent's Guide to Childhood* (New York, NY: DK Publishing, 2008), 29.

and great characters of the Bible. Fowler has pointed out, "A preschooler's experience of faith is rooted in the young child's imagination, intuitive and conceptual qualities."<sup>9</sup>

Toddlers have now reached the Pre-Operational Stage of cognitive development. "(Toddler and Early Childhood). In this period (which has two sub stages), intelligence is demonstrated through the use of symbols, language use matures, and memory and imagination are developed, but thinking is done in a non-logical, non-reversible manner. Egocentric thinking predominates."<sup>10</sup> Thus, moral development may now be at stage One of Level One as Kohlberg contends, "Obedience and Punishment Orientation: The child/individual is good in order to avoid being punished. If a person is punished they must have done wrong."<sup>11</sup> Davis explains further, "Moral values reside in external, quasi-physical events, or in bad acts. The child is responsive to rules and evaluative labels, but views them in terms of pleasant or unpleasant consequences of actions, or in terms of the physical power of those who impose the rules."<sup>12</sup>

Cooper builds on this idea, adding,

At age four, he(grandchild) will be able to understand that behavior that hurt others, such as hitting another child, is less acceptable than, for example, breaking household rules by not putting away toys or hanging up his jacket. He

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<sup>9</sup> Ross A. Thompson and Brady Randall, eds. Arlene Andrews and Natalie Kaufman, "Implementing the U.N. Convention to the Rights of children. A Standard of Living for Development" (Santa Barbara, CA : Praeger, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> Huitt and Hummel, "Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development."

<sup>11</sup> McLeod, "Kohlberg," *Simply Psychology*.

<sup>12</sup> D. Davis, "Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development" *Haverford.edu. Psychology*, 109, accessed July 16, 2015, <http://www.haverford.edu/psychology/ddavis/p109g/kohlberg.stages.html>

will be motivated to behave well to get your praise and avoid your disapproval, so this is an ideal age to start teaching values.<sup>13</sup>

This can work quite well when at the grandparent's homes as grands should be quick to praise and to accommodate in teaching right from wrong—virtue. At this age, playing is important, but so are simple responsibilities. “Giving your child easy tasks at this age paves the way for later helpfulness.”<sup>14</sup> This is a grandparental specialty. Grands love to have grandchildren help in many, many tasks, from helping grandma cook to setting the table or handing grandpa a tool. Everyone benefits, and value as a virtue is instilled in both.

From a faith development point of view, toddlers are at a fun stage. Fowler explains,

Intuitive-Projective Faith (Preschool years): Faith is magical, imaginative, intuitive, and illogical, filled with fantasy and fascinated by stories of the power and omnipotence of God and the mysteries of birth and death. These stories are internalized in terms of the concerns of children of this age (e.g., protection from threat, dependability of adults, sickness and health), thus the understandings constructed by children from religious lessons may be much different from those intended by their adult tutors.<sup>15</sup>

So, grands might not want to concentrate so much on why God was mad enough to destroy the earth, but rather on the great tale of gathering the animals into the ark.

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<sup>13</sup> Cooper, Halsey, Laurent and Sullivan, *Growing Up*, 65.

<sup>14</sup> Cooper, Halsey, Laurent and Sullivan, *Growing Up*, 73.

<sup>15</sup> Thompson and Randall, “Implementing the U.N. Convention.”

### Early Childhood (Ages: 3-5)

Approximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
4–5 years	Purpose	Initiative vs. guilt	Family	Is it okay for me to do, move, and act?	Exploring, using tools or making art

Table 5. Erik Erickson Psychosocial Development

Erikson believes that this third psychosocial crisis occurs during what he calls the “play age,” or the later preschool years (from about 3½ to, in the United States culture, entry into formal school). During it, the healthily developing child learns: (1) to imagine, to broaden his skills through active play of all sorts, including fantasy (2) to cooperate with others (3) to lead as well as to follow. Immobilized by guilt, he is: (1) fearful (2) hangs on the fringes of groups (3) continues to depend unduly on adults and (4) is restricted both in the development of play skills and in imagination.<sup>16</sup>

McLeod adds:

Around age three and continuing to age five, children assert themselves more frequently. These are particularly lively, rapid-developing years in a child’s life. According to Bee (1992) it is a “time of vigor of action and of behaviors that the parents may see as aggressive.”

During this period the primary feature involves the child regularly interacting with other children at school. Central to this stage is play, as it provides children with the opportunity to explore their interpersonal skills through initiating activities.

Children begin to plan activities, make up games, and initiate activities with others. If given this opportunity, children develop a sense of initiative, and feel secure in their ability to lead others and make decisions.

Conversely, if this tendency is squelched, either through criticism or control, children develop a sense of guilt. They may feel like a nuisance to others and will therefore remain followers, lacking in self-initiative.

<sup>16</sup> “Erikson’s Eight Stages of Development,” *Child Development Institute*.



The child takes initiatives which the parents will often try to stop in order to protect the child. The child will often overstep the mark in his forcefulness and the danger is that the parents will tend to punish the child and restrict his initiatives too much.

It is at this stage that the child will begin to ask many questions as his thirst for knowledge grows. If the parents treat the child's questions as trivial, a nuisance or embarrassing or other aspects of their behavior as threatening then the child may have feelings of guilt for "being a nuisance."

Too much guilt can make the child slow to interact with others and may inhibit their creativity. Some guilt is, of course, necessary otherwise the child would not know how to exercise self-control or have a conscience.

A healthy balance between initiative and guilt is important. Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of purpose.<sup>17</sup>

Of course, grandparents need to be sensitive to the fact that the once proven technique of shaming a teenager into considering the consequences of an inappropriate action is not the way to deal with a young, developing grandchild. Grands need to be patient, firm, considerate, and verbal in their reasons for scolding a grandchild, while keeping in mind that the grandchild's sense of purpose often gets developed by pushing other people's buttons. A follow up hug or treat can never be underestimated.

In early childhood, Piaget's cognitive development is still in the pre-operational stage. Moral development is still at level one, stage one. However, Fowler's stages of faith development has now reached stage two: "Mythic-Literal faith: Faith is captured in the stories that children hear and tell about God, and the meanings that their literal but logical interpretations of these stories provide about human relations with the divine.

Participation in the symbols and observances of the religious community also fosters the

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<sup>17</sup> McLeod, "Erik Erikson."

initial appropriation of religious beliefs in oneself.”<sup>18</sup> This may be a good time to let the grandchild put money in the offering plate or to start participating in communion.

From a grandparent’s point of view, the virtues of purpose and significance of family can be tapped into as children are learning new skills such as telling time, learning to swim, and losing teeth. Grands can invest heavily in the growing relationship as triumphs can be celebrated, talents can be recognized, and losses can be consoled and sometimes considered adventurous. At this age, board games, memory games, and role play can be shared as, “She (grandchild) is able to understand and respect rules.”<sup>19</sup> Biblical role play with inexpensive costumes can be a part of the grandchild visit.

#### Childhood (Ages: 5-12)

Approximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
5–12 years	Competence	Industry vs. inferiority	Neighbors, school	Can I make it in the world of people and things?	School, sports

Table 6. Erik Erickson Psychosocial Development

Industry Versus Inferiority (Competence): Erikson believes that the fourth psychosocial crisis is handled, for better or worse, during what he calls the “school age,” presumably up to and possibly including some of junior high school. Here the child learns to master the more formal skills of life: (1) relating with peers according to rules (2) progressing from free play to play that may be elaborately structured by rules and may demand formal teamwork, such as baseball and (3) mastering social studies, reading, arithmetic. Homework is a

<sup>18</sup> Thompson and Randall, “Implementing the U.N.”

<sup>19</sup> Cooper, Halsey, Laurent and Sullivan, *Growing Up*, 86.

necessity, and the need for self-discipline increases yearly. The child who, because of his successive and successful resolutions of earlier psychosocial crisis, is trusting, autonomous, and full of initiative will learn easily enough to be industrious. However, the mistrusting child will doubt the future. The shame – and guilt-filled child will experience defeat and inferiority.<sup>20</sup>

Or as McLeod cites:

Industry (competence) vs. Inferiority: Children are at the stage (aged 5 to 12 yrs.) where they will be learning to read and write, to do sums, to make things on their own. Teachers begin to take an important role in the child's life as they teach the child specific skills.

It is at this stage that the child's peer group will gain greater significance and will become a major source of the child's self-esteem. The child now feels the need to win approval by demonstrating specific competencies that are valued by society, and begin to develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments.

If children are encouraged and reinforced for their initiative, they begin to feel industrious and feel confident in their ability to achieve goals. If this initiative is not encouraged, if it is restricted by parents or teacher, then the child begins to feel inferior, doubting his own abilities and therefore may not reach his or her potential.

If the child cannot develop the specific skill they feel society is demanding (e.g. being athletic) then they may develop a sense of inferiority. Some failure may be necessary so that the child can develop some modesty. Yet again, a balance between competence and modesty is necessary. Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of competence.<sup>21</sup>

These can be tough times for the child. These may be the times that the grandchild is stuck between his or her love and acceptance in his relationships with parents and grandparents, and the ever-increasing need to experience approval and

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<sup>20</sup> "Erikson's Eight Stages of Development," *Child Development Institute*.

<sup>21</sup> McLeod, "Erik Erikson."

acceptance from those outside of the familial unit. For a while, grandparents can occupy the same category as parents, teachers, and other authority figures.

These are the ages during which many physical, emotional, and social changes are taking place in the body and mind of the grandchild. Physical growth, interest in the opposite sex, the need for one's own room, the possibility of being bullied, the increase in home work, are all part of the early years of this age span. Often, 9-11 year olds develop hobbies they enjoy, begin to display signs of puberty, and are very self-conscious as Cooper points out, "Children at this age begin to compare themselves to others, and it is essential to developing self-esteem that you encourage self-awareness."<sup>22</sup>

At this stage, grandparents need to become experts in the art of discovery and praise. Let your grandchild amaze you. Let them be individually unique and special. Do not take things so seriously as your grandchild enters puberty and "naturally" becomes grumpier, nitpicky, withdrawn, messy, risk-taking, experimenting, and more. Cooper states, "It is normal for a child to become more irascible and sarcastic at this age, which is due to an improved capacity to handle more abstract thought."<sup>23</sup> Pre-teen grandchildren may demand the patience of Job. Yet, grandparents can put up with "attitudes" for a few hours or days, always smiling in delight because they (the grandchildren) will eventually go home to live—O the joy of payback!

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<sup>22</sup> Cooper, Halsey, Laurent and Sullivan, *Growing Up*, 210.

<sup>23</sup> Cooper, Halsey, Laurent and Sullivan, *Growing Up*, 229.

Cognitive development reaches the concrete operational stage:

(Elementary and early adolescence). In this stage (characterized by 7 types of conservation: number, length, liquid, mass, weight, area, volume), intelligence is demonstrated through logical and systematic manipulation of symbols related to concrete objects. Operational thinking develops (mental actions that are reversible). Egocentric thought diminishes.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, moral development has reached the final stage (Stage 2) of Kohlberg's Level One where, "Individualism and Exchange. At this stage children recognize that there is not just one right view that is handed down by the authorities. Different individuals have different viewpoints."<sup>25</sup> A.K.A.: "Backtalk." Put another way, "Naively egoistic orientation: Right action is that which is instrumental in satisfying the self's needs and occasionally others'. Relativism of values to each actor's needs and perspectives. Naive egalitarianism, orientation to exchange and reciprocity."<sup>26</sup>

Regarding faith development, Fowler refers to early adolescence: "Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional Faith (Late school years, early adolescence). Faith is encompassed in a fairly uncritical, tacit acceptance of the conventional religious values taught by others, centered on feelings of what is right and wrong, especially in interpersonal relationships."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Huitt and Hummel, "Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development."

<sup>25</sup> McLeod, "Kohlberg."

<sup>26</sup> D. Davis, "Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development" *Haverford.edu. Psychology*. 109, accessed July 16, 2015, <http://www.haverford.edu/psychology/ddavis/p109g/kohlberg.stages.html>.

<sup>27</sup> Thompson and Randall, "Implementing the U.N. Convention."

## Adolescence (Ages 13-19)

Approximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
13–19 years	Fidelity	Identity vs. role confusion	Peers, role model	Who am I? Who can I be?	Social relationships

Table 7. Erik Erickson Psychosocial Development

Grandparents are most likely to influence grandchildren for the long run during the teenage years. The virtue according to Erikson that is developed in the teen is that of “fidelity”—faithfulness. Grands stand in the gap between parental expectations for their child and the child looking to gain autonomy from their parent’s authority and high expectations. In other words, grands exemplify the long look at life that at this time seems daunting and challenging to the teen. How will they make out? What will be their profession? Will they live up to their parents’ expectations over the years ahead?

Grands simply are. They are a picture of life already lived and a secure depiction of where a teen will someday—way, way in the future, of course, arrive. Faithful commitment to Christ and one’s church can be incredibly influential in the heart and mind of the grandchild as they age. Kids will forget your crankiness and argumentative nature that you may have with your spouse, but they will always remember your commitment to Christ and his church. With that said, we now explore development issues:

Learning Identity versus Identity Diffusion (Fidelity). During the fifth psychosocial crisis (adolescence, from about 13 or 14 to about 20) the child, now an adolescent, learns how to answer satisfactorily and happily the question of “Who am I?” But even the best – adjusted of adolescents experiences some role

identity diffusion: most boys and probably most girls experiment with minor delinquency; rebellion flourishes; self – doubts flood the youngster, and so on. Erikson believes that during successful early adolescence, mature time perspective is developed; the young person acquires self-certainty as opposed to self-consciousness and self-doubt. He comes to experiment with different – usually constructive – roles rather than adopting a “negative identity” (such as delinquency). He actually anticipates achievement, and achieves, rather than being “paralyzed” by feelings of inferiority or by an inadequate time perspective. In later adolescence, clear sexual identity – manhood or womanhood – is established. The adolescent seeks leadership (someone to inspire him), and gradually develops a set of ideals (socially congruent and desirable, in the case of the successful adolescent). Erikson believes that, in our culture, adolescence affords a “psychosocial moratorium,” particularly for middle – and upper-class American children. They do not yet have to “play for keeps,” but can experiment, trying various roles, and thus hopefully find the one most suitable for them.<sup>28</sup>

Or as McLeod further explains the psycho-social development:

During adolescence (age 12 to 18 yrs.), the transition from childhood to adulthood is most important. Children are becoming more independent, and begin to look at the future in terms of career, relationships, families, housing, etc. The individual wants to belong to a society and fit in.

This is a major stage in development where the child has to learn the roles he will occupy as an adult. It is during this stage that the adolescent will re-examine his identity and try to find out exactly who he or she is. Erikson suggests that two identities are involved: the sexual and the occupational.

According to Bee (1992), what should happen at the end of this stage is “a reintegrated sense of self, of what one wants to do or be, and of one’s appropriate sex role.” During this stage the body image of the adolescent changes.

Erikson claims that the adolescent may feel uncomfortable about their body for a while until they can adapt and “grow into” the changes. Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of fidelity.

Fidelity involves being able to commit one's self to others on the basis of accepting others even when there may be ideological differences.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> “Erikson’s Eight Stages of Development,” *Child Development Institute*.

<sup>29</sup> McLeod, “Erik Erikson.”

Here, a teen's cognitive development gains maturity as Piaget's stages reach their conclusion:

Formal operational stage (Adolescence and adulthood). In this stage, intelligence is demonstrated through the logical use of symbols related to abstract concepts. Early in the period there is a return to egocentric thought. Only 35% of high school graduates in industrialized countries obtain formal operations; many people do not think formally during adulthood.<sup>30</sup>

Stated more succinctly, "Around the onset of puberty, children are able to reason in much more abstract ways and to test hypotheses using systematic logic. There is a much greater focus on possibilities and on ideological issues."<sup>31</sup>

Ideological thinking brings into play Kohlberg's Level 2, conventional morality, stages of Moral development. In the early to mid-teen year's, stages three and four are reached:

Stage 3: Good-boy/good-girl orientation: Orientation to approval, to pleasing and helping others. Conformity to stereotypical images of majority or natural role behavior. Stage Four: Action is evaluated in terms of intentions. Authority and social-order-maintaining orientation: Orientation to "doing duty" and to showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order or its own sake. Regard for earned expectations of others. Differentiates actions out of a sense of obligation to rules from actions for generally "nice" or natural motives.<sup>32</sup>

For the conscientious grandparent, the grandchild is literally growing older and growing up before their eyes.

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<sup>30</sup> Huitt and Hummel, "Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development."

<sup>31</sup> "Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development," *Psychology Charts*, accessed July 18, 2015, <http://www.psychologycharts.com/piaget-stages-of-cognitive-development.html>.

<sup>32</sup> D. Davis, "Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development" *Haverford.edu. Psychology*. 109, accessed July 16, 2015.



Thus, faith development also begins to take on a more, yet not fully developed, maturity. Stage three which developed in late childhood, continues to expand and mature. Yet, as can be expected, it is driven by the teen's idealism: "At this stage people rely on some sort of institution (such as a church) to give them stability. They become attached to the forms of their religion and get extremely upset when these are called into question."<sup>33</sup>

Teen years can be challenging. Cooper explains,

Quite apart from the huge number of physical and emotional changes experienced by your teen, he may have additional circumstances that can be stressful. He is likely to change schools, moving on to the next stage of his education, which can be daunting. He will undoubtedly demand new freedoms, but still requires solid boundaries to feel secure.<sup>34</sup>

Grandparents can provide the best of two worlds at this time: Extended liberties and unconditional love with enough boundaries that provide for a safe journey in and through the teens years, and onto adulthood.

#### Early Adulthood (Ages: 20-39)

Approximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
20–39 years	Love	Intimacy vs. isolation	Friends, partners	Can I love?	Romantic relationships

Table 8. Erik Erickson Psychosocial Development

<sup>33</sup> "James Fowler's Stages of Faith," *Psychology Charts*, accessed July 18, 2015, <http://www.psychologycharts.com/james-fowler-stages-of-faith.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Cooper, Halsey, Laurent and Sullivan, *Growing Up*, 247.

By the time the grandchild enters these years, most grandparents have reached retirement age. In today's society, this does not necessarily mean that grandparents slow down, or put the rocker on the front porch and rock the years away. Often, today's grandparents are busier in retirement than when they were in the workplace. At the same time, aging grandchildren will be more involved in their own lives, be busy dreaming and moving toward a future of their own, and starting their own intimate relationships and families. By sheer circumstance, most grandchildren will visit grandparents less often.

Erik Erikson sees this as the Intimacy vs. Isolation period of development:

"Occurring in young adulthood (ages 18 to 40 yrs.), we begin to share ourselves more intimately with others. We explore relationships leading toward longer term commitments with someone other than a family member. Successful completion of this stage can lead to comfortable relationships and a sense of commitment, safety, and care within a relationship. Avoiding intimacy, fearing commitment and relationships can lead to isolation, loneliness, and sometimes depression. Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of love."<sup>35</sup>

"The successful young adult, for the first time, can experience true intimacy – the sort of intimacy that makes possible good marriage or a genuine and enduring friendship."<sup>36</sup> In light of the subject of this thesis-project, Erikson's last two stages of psychosocial development: Generativity vs. stagnation (40-60 yrs.) and Ego-integrity vs. despair (65-death) are not applicable to most grandchildren.

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<sup>35</sup> McLeod, "Erik Erikson."

<sup>36</sup> "Erikson's Eight Stages of Development," *Child Development Institute*.

Operationally, cognitive development also has reached its zenith. People continue to learn through life at Piaget's Stage 4, Formal operational. As far as moral development, grandparents tend to pray and hope that grandchildren can and should move on into Kohlberg's Level 3, Post-conventional/Self-Accepted Moral Principles, Stages 5 & 6.

Contractual/legalistic orientation: Norms of right and wrong are defined in terms of laws or institutionalized rules which seem to have a rational basis. When conflict arises between individual needs and law or contract, though sympathetic to the former, the individual believes the latter must prevail because of its greater functional rationality for society, the majority will and welfare. Stage 6: The morality of individual principles of conscience: Orientation not only toward existing social rules, but also toward the conscience as a directing agent, mutual trust and respect, and principles of moral choice involving logical universalities and consistency. Action is controlled by internalized ideals that exert a pressure to act accordingly regardless of the reactions of others in the immediate environment. If one acts otherwise, self-condemnation and guilt result.<sup>37</sup>

However, faith development is a different story. For some grandparents, this is the time that they see the faith life of the grandchild deepen and bear fruit. Here, one can begin to feel comfortable that the beloved grandchild will not only incorporate faith into their lives, but will also pass it down to the next generation. Now, the grandparent is more of a "Sage" with a mature outlook on faith issues.

However, grandchildren will not always heed instruction nor consider grandma and grandpa correct. They must explore, experience, and encounter their own life of faith. At some point, they may go on to develop Stage 5; Conjunctive Faith, or even Stage 6, Universalizing Faith:

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<sup>37</sup> Davis, "Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development."

Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith (Adulthood) Faith confronts but also accepts the paradoxes and contradictions of religious life: the irrational mysteries of prayer and worship, but also the rational reflections of belief and values, for example. Stage 6: Universalizing Faith (Adulthood) Faith is grounded in comprehensive truths – concerning justice, love, and compassion – that may cause individuals to take unusual (sometimes radical) steps to live out their faith, such as selfless devotion to the poor (as with Mother Teresa) or non-violent (as with Gandhi) or even violent (as with Dietrich Bonhoeffer) resistance to political wrong. This level of faith development is rarely found.<sup>38</sup>

Quite obviously, a grandchild who reaches these last two stages has probably had a number of mentors and exemplary examples.

For most grandparents, this can be a time when there is still doubt about a grandchild's faith journey. As such, the grandparents are still challenged to be an example and to be pro-active in their defense and witness of the faith before their grown grandchildren.

### Drawing Some Conclusions

We have tried to describe what exactly is going on in the body, mind, and soul of the beloved grandchild during various age ranges. Of course, the goal is to give the grandparent a snapshot into the life of the grandchild as they grow and mature. The overall objective is to provide an evangelically-minded grandparent with a little insight into the way that they may choose to present the Gospel message that is conducive to the child's level of understanding and comprehension.

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<sup>38</sup> Thompson and Randall, "Implementing the U.N. Convention."

Erikson's psychosocial development provided the age breakdown at crucial times of change in the child's life. He provides grandparents an age-related peek into the unique mixture of physiological growth and psychological traits of the precious grandson or daughter. The "virtue" that is developed or impeded through each psychosocial crisis is crucial in a grandparent's understanding of the emotional and spiritual growth throughout the early years of a grandchild's life. It is not that grandparents have to be experts in human behavior, but they should have an idea of why a child is acting a certain way. Recognizing that a behavior is not only normal, but to be expected, can allow grandparents to react intelligently and thoughtfully when confronted by an age-appropriate negative behavior. This makes it possible to see the child as both a physical and spiritual entity.

Piaget's cognitive development offers grandparents a peek into the learning "minds" of their grandchild. Each of the four stages is a point that explains the what, how, and what will be the way that a grandchild understands and learns. Kohlberg's 3 levels and 6 stages of moral development was meant to provide grandparents a peek into the "heart" of the growing grandchild. Morally speaking, a grandparent can know that the kind of viewpoint a grandchild has at this stage is normal, not wrong, and pliable, not set. Grands should not expect grandchildren to be mini-saints or pseudo-angels. Their bad behavior proves that they *are* moral rather than amoral. They are kids. They are learning to be good, to make choices, and to act right, and we must give them to room to do so.

Finally, Fowler's six stages of faith development that span a person's lifetime was meant to provide grandparents a peek into the "soul" of their beloved treasure. How do they understand God? Have they grasped who Jesus is? Or, are they still searching? Whatever the case, grands can assess the spiritual fruit—or lack thereof, at each stage of a young person's life, and thus, deem the right approach to talk to their grandchild about faith issues. The next section deals with how to communicate with children, teens, and young adults at each stage of Erickson's outline.

### **The Communicating Grandparent**

Sara Gable states, "Effective communication with children requires communication styles and behavior appropriate to the age of the child. Understanding how children of different ages communicate and what they like to talk about is crucial for rewarding interaction with them. Adults must communicate in a way that relates to the age and interests of the child."<sup>39</sup>

#### **Infants (Ages: 0-2)**

Infants communicate with their coos, gurgles, and grunts, facial expressions, cries, body movements like cuddling or back arching, eye movements such as looking towards and looking away and arm and leg movements.

Encourage infant communication:

Quickly respond to infant communication (e.g., comfort a crying baby; smile at a smiling infant; relax if a baby turns her head to the side)

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<sup>39</sup> Sara Gable, "Communicating Effectively with Children," *Families and Relationships* GH6123, reviewed June 2003, University of Missouri Extension, accessed July 21, 2015, <http://extension.missouri.edu/p/GH6123>.

Provide meaning to infants' communicative efforts (e.g., "You are crying, I know it is time for your bottle;" "You are smiling, you like it when I tickle your feet!")

Use a sing-song, high-pitched tone of voice, exaggerated facial expressions and wide-opened eyes when interacting with young infants. These types of behavior capture infants' attention and help them to keep focused on interacting.

Make the most of the times when you and an infant are facing each other (e.g., during diaper changes, feedings, mealtimes) and talk, sing or gently tickle the infant. Infants are fascinated by adult faces and love to look at them when they are close.

Pay attention to an infant's style of expressing emotions, preferred level of activity and tendency to be social. Some infants are quiet and observant and prefer infrequent adult interaction. Other infants are emotional, active and seek continuous adult attention and interaction. Recognizing the unique personality of each infant will make effective communication easier.<sup>40</sup>

*WebMD* sums up communicating at this age:

Your baby's first year will be a flurry of changes -- and not just diapers. From the first smiles, gurgles, and coos to learning to say 'mama' or 'dada,' babies love to communicate with their own form of baby talk. And they hope you'll 'baby talk' right back. All through this first year, you can do a lot to encourage your baby's communication skills. And it's easy. All you need do is smile, talk, sing, and read to your baby.<sup>41</sup>

This should come natural to grandparents. The real question is, is this too young to start to introduce elements of faith? The answer is found in who the grandparent is rather what the grandparent could or should do. The grand who dearly loves and cherishes the Lord in their own life cannot help but to communicate to the young infant

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<sup>40</sup> Gable, "Communicating Effectively with Children."

<sup>41</sup> Roy Benaroch. "How Your Newborn Grows: Infant Development," *WebMD* August 3, 2014, accessed July 22, 2015, <http://www.webmd.com/parenting/baby/infant-development-9/baby-talk>.

words such as, “God loves you,” “Jesus loves you,” and “I love you.” A godly grandparent will also consider a strategically placed rocker where a picture of Jesus is clearly in the infant’s eyesight. Christian music playing in the background at naptime is another option. Is this a tad fanatical? Perhaps, but in reality, as a Christian you are who you are, you share what you love, and you live not just for yourself, but for others. This said, the primary gospel tool for all infants is simply you.

### Toddlers (Ages 2-4)

“Toddlers communicate with a combination of gestures and grunts, one word sentences, two word sentences, positive and negative emotional expressions and body movements.”<sup>42</sup> At this stage tone of voice, touch and body language speaks volumes to the toddler. Gillian McNamee adds:

Turn baby talk into a two-way conversation. Invite responses from your baby. Singing and chanting nursery rhymes are good ways to play with sound. They invite your baby to make a pleasing stream of sounds that eventually lead to talking.

Extend sounds and words to help children develop language skills. If your toddler says “Go home,” you might extend this thought by saying, “You want to go home. We can leave in a few minutes.”

Even if you’re not sure how much your child understands, talk anyway! Just like holding and kissing, words are an important way of staying in contact with your baby. They’ll help your baby begin to attach feelings and thoughts to sounds.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Gable, “Communicating Effectively with Children.”

<sup>43</sup> Gillian McNamee. “How to Communicate with Babies and Toddlers,” *raisingchildren.net.au: the Australian Parenting Website* 2015, accessed July 22, 2015, [http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/how\\_you\\_communicate\\_with\\_babies\\_and\\_toddlers\\_pbs.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/how_you_communicate_with_babies_and_toddlers_pbs.html).



For grandparents, the need is to follow the parents lead in helping to facilitate the natural growth of the grandchild. Gable stresses three areas where grandparents can certainly be involved:

Make the most of daily routines and talk toddlers through routines in the sequence in which they happen (e.g., 'First we put warm water in the bathtub... then you take off your clothes and get in! Time to get the washrag soapy and clean you up... first I'll wash your little toes...')

During play with toddlers, follow their lead and let them create the play. Describe for toddlers what they are doing during play and let them have control (e.g., 'Oh, you are driving the car up the sofa, now it is falling to the floor! Here comes the truck to take the car to the garage.')

When telling older toddlers what you want, provide an explanation and tell the toddler WHY you want something to happen (e.g., 'Janey, I told you to please pick up your blocks and put them away. I don't want anyone tripping and falling over them.')

<sup>44</sup>

Indeed, rolling on the floor, playing, giving baths, and instructive talk are the specialties of most grandparents. Again, the toddler will respond to the love, affection, facial expressions and tones that the grandparent displays. At this age, any sense of the goodness of a loving and forgiving God is on display through the grandparent's countenance and actions. As the grandchild ages, they will begin to associate more of a "looking-like God" to grandparents; old, white hair, and wrinkled. Strategically placed pictures and loving words are still the best tools that the evangelistically-minded grand has to offer and utilize. Now, picture books become part of the communication process, and the primary gospel tool for toddlers is "The Wordless Book,"

#### Early Childhood (Ages: 3-5)

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<sup>44</sup> Gable, "Communicating Effectively with Children."

Children learn how to talk and listen as they grow and develop. Positive talking and listening is about taking turns, speaking politely, not interrupting and not talking back. Self-regulation is an important part of learning to talk and listen, and it's harder for some children than others. The kind of temperament your child has plays a part too – a very social child might want to be involved in every conversation and have trouble listening. On the other hand, a child who isn't as social will probably find it easier to listen but might find it harder to respond. Being able to talk and listen to others is important for kids. It helps children make friends, be listened to, ask for what they need and mix with others.<sup>45</sup>

Gable adds:

**Ask preschoolers questions** about past events; probe for details and provide new words to enhance description of experiences (e.g., "Tell me who you played with at child care today? What did you do together?")

**Encourage preschoolers to talk about their feelings**, both positive and negative, and discuss the possible causes for the emotions.

**Create opportunities for preschoolers to engage in fantasy and pretend play**, either alone or with friends (e.g., pretend baby bathing, pretend housekeeping, pretend astronaut play)

**Provide opportunities for preschoolers to experience the connection between the spoken word and the written word** (e.g., label familiar parts of the physical environment; have children tell you stories and write them down; allow children to 'write' their own stories or thank you notes; have children collect items from the environment which include words that they can read, such as toothpaste tubes or cereal boxes)

**When preschoolers are talking to themselves, let them be. Self-talk helps preschoolers focus on what they are doing.**<sup>46</sup>

At this age, grandkids love to talk and to be listened to. A patient grandparent will have lots of opportunities to spend quality time entering into the vast domain of a child's imagination. Enjoy it. By this time, most preschoolers are already learning the

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<sup>45</sup> Gillian McNamee, "4-5 years: Preschooler Development," *raisingchildren.net.au: the Australian Parenting Website* 2015, accessed July 22, 2015, [http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/conversation\\_skills\\_children.html/context/289](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/conversation_skills_children.html/context/289).

<sup>46</sup> Gable, "Communicating Effectively with Children."

alphabet, and they love to “help” read stories. Work in some Bible stories in the mix and utilize simple story books that have words. This is a good time to introduce a grandchild to the primary gospel tool of “God’s Good news in Color.” Also, by this age, a regular bed and sleeping space is usually provided. Crosses, pictures of Jesus with children, pictures of angels, and so on, can be a part of the silent witness of room decorating.

### Childhood (Ages: 5-12)

What a great age this is for a grandparent! Lots of kids are involved in lots of activities, and grands can always be the ones who will be there for the events, given the right circumstances. The British website, *Talkingpoint.org*, describes how children ages 7-11 develop speech and language:

Speech, language and communication development is a gradual process. Children develop skills at different rates, but beyond 8 years, usually children will: Use language to predict and draw conclusions. Use long and complex sentences. Understand other points of view and show that they agree or disagree. Understand comparative words e.g. “it was earlier than yesterday.” Keep a conversation going by giving reasons and explaining choices? Start conversations with adults and children they don’t know. Understand and use passive sentences e.g. “the thief is chased by the policeman.”<sup>47</sup>

Some solid advice comes from Carrie, “If your seven or eight year old asks questions, answer them as simply as possible. Now is the time to start answering things. However, do take into account that they don’t need a book on the subject and in fact,

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<sup>47</sup> “Ages and Stages: 7-11 Years,” *Talkingpoint, org*, Accessed July 23, 2015, <http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/ages-and-stages/7-11-years>.

most children at this age are satisfied with just a sentence or two about their subject of inquiry.”<sup>48</sup> Additional good advice comes from Sara Gable:

Encourage school-age communication:

Use conversation as a way to keep up with school-age children's activities, likes, dislikes and peer relationships. Peers are important at this stage and by talking with children regularly, adults can keep informed about school-age children's relationships with their age-mates.

Use conversation to help school-age children set goals and solve problems (“if you have to go to Girl Scouts this afternoon, let's talk about when you can do your homework.”). Take the time to discuss strategies and solutions and have the school-age child talk about possible outcomes.

When correcting the school age child's behavior, provide a calm explanation for your preferences. By giving a reason, you help the school-age child understand the implications of his or her behavior for others (e.g., if your child teases another child because he or she wears glasses, explain that wearing glasses helps the child to see better and remind the child that teasing can hurt another's feelings).

Encourage school-age children to talk about their feelings and the possible reasons for their emotions.

Use conversation to help school-age children learn conflict management skills. Because peer relationships are becoming more important at this age, conflicts between children will likely arise. Help children learn how to manage conflicts effectively while preserving the peer relationship. Act out pretend peer interactions with children and show how conflicts can be resolved, depending on how children handle the situation.<sup>49</sup>

Some specific advice for Grandparents may be:

Make time to hear about the day's activities; be sure your child knows you're actively interested and listening carefully. Remember to talk with and listen to your kids, not at them. Ask questions that go beyond “yes” or “no” answers to prompt more developed conversation. Take advantage of time during car trips or standing in line at the supermarket to talk with your child. Provide activities that offer opportunities to improve communication skills, such as attending or

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<sup>48</sup> Carrie\_\_\_\_\_. “How to Talk to Your Seven and Eight Year Old,” *The Parenting Passageway Blog*, February 10, 2010, accessed July 23, 2015, <http://theparentingpassageway.com/2010/02/26/how-to-talk-to-your-seven-and-eight-year-old/>.

<sup>49</sup> Gable, “Communicating Effectively with Children.”

engaging in sporting and school events, talking about current events, and reading stories that are slightly above your child's competency level.<sup>50</sup>

It is also a great age to be a Christian grandparent. Kids are pre-puberty and the raging hormones have yet to arrive. Grandchildren can now take part in different aspects of the grandparent's church and meet some new Christian friends. For the most part, they do not have to be cared for, just looked after. They can enter into more meaningful conversation concerning a loving God and a living Jesus. At this age, grandkids are thinkers, striving to be competent in the things they undertake.

For the creative grandparent, a house may include lots of board games, Christian pop music and DVD's, young-reader books, and a good variety of arts and crafts. Pictures that depict Christ walking on water, on the Emmaus Road, or at the Last Supper can be placed in the grands' selected and personal sleeping area. At this creative age, the primary gospel tool is creative as well. The "Bridge illustration" presents the message of the gospel in a way that encourages the fun-seeking pre-teen's participation.

### Adolescence (Ages 13-19)

In general, adolescence is the time when grandparents may provide a better "ear" for the grandchild than what they are experiencing with his or her parents. As Amy Morin points out, "Although many teens can't seem to stop talking to their friends, they often won't talk to their parents. A lack of conversation leaves many parents

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<sup>50</sup> Mary L. Gavin, "Communicating with Your 6-12 Year old," *Rady Children's Hospital San Diego*, October 11, 2011, accessed July 23, 2015, <http://www.rchsd.org/health-articles/communication-and-your-6-to-12-year-old/>.

feeling shut out of the teen's world."<sup>51</sup> Her eight point advice to parents might be the same for grandparents: 1) Reflect on what you hear; 2) Treat you teen better than a stranger; 3) Validate your teen's feeling; 4) Listen more than you talk; 5) Ask questions that help your teen to reach the answer; 6) Change your pattern of communication; 7) Problem solve together; and 8) Build credibility.<sup>52</sup> Many times, grandparents are the ones with whom the grandchild will share some of their deepest longings and secrets, frustrations and feelings, and complaints about parents, friends, and school.

Grandparents will have to strive to be patient, to bite their tongue, and to remain full of compassion, wisdom, and grace. Sara Gable adds, discussing adolescent communication:

Be actively sensitive and responsive to the adolescent experience. Remember, each adolescent is going through major social and physical changes; practice putting yourself in the adolescent's place when you find yourself disagreeing or growing impatient.

Use conversation as an opportunity to keep up with adolescent activities and relationships. Stay interested in the adolescent and gently ask questions and seek explanations for adolescent behavior.

Although adolescents strive for independence and separation from the family, you can best maintain the relationship by providing a balance between expecting personal responsibility from the adolescent and offering consistent support.

Be flexible. Seek to understand the adolescent perspective first before trying to be understood yourself. Maintaining the adult-child relationship is perhaps the most helpful thing that one can do for supporting the adolescent through these years.

Recognize that the adolescent is developing ideas that may be different from your own. Unless these ideas place the adolescent in danger of harm to self

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<sup>51</sup> Amy Morin, "8 Strategies that Will Encourage Your Teen to Talk to You," *About Parenting*, accessed July 23, 2015, <http://parentingteens.about.com/od/talktoyourteen/fl/8-Strategies-that-Will-Encourage-Your-Teen-to-Talk-to-You.htm>.

<sup>52</sup> Amy Morin, "8 Strategies."

or others, accept the adolescent's beliefs as an example of their developing individuality.<sup>53</sup>

A grandparent's house can be a haven of rest and peace, and a stabilizing factor, in the oft unstable life of the adolescent. Pictures of Christ on the cross, the 10 commandments, Jesus driving the money changers from the temple, or a cross wall are decorations that fit well into the teen's sense of justice verses injustice, idealism and disappointment, identity and fidelity. An evangelism tool can be shared at this time if a grandparent has walked the walk and earned the right to talk about such things. The tool which challenges the teen to choose sides and that plays into the older teen's inner striving for some concreteness and step-by-step proven formulas finding the right path for their lives, is Campus Crusades', "The 4 Spiritual Laws."

The teenage years can be a great, yet daunting, and oft times confusing time for adolescents. During this stage, the ministry of grandparents is to first, "be." Be who and what you preach, and live the life you proclaim is the "way." Second, it is to "speak." Speak words of truth, explain what you believe, offer sound advice concerning "how" to connect, or reconnect, with Christ. In other words, cast a lot, not a little, seeds of faith. Will they bear fruit in the teen's immediate future? Maybe, but probably not. Yet, the grand-teen will not forget what you have said and what you stood for in your life. You may not seed the fruits of your spiritual labor for the Lord in your lifetime, but God is faithful, in his time and in his way. As a faithful grandparent who has diligently strived to live a life of faithful witness and word for the Lord, I would be inclined to wait at the

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<sup>53</sup> Gable, "Communicating Effectively with Children."

Eastern gate to see the face of the older, wiser grandchild who, because of you, has made his or her way to the streets of gold.

#### Early Adulthood (Ages: 20-39)

Conversation when the grandchild reaches adulthood reaches a unique stage as the grandchild is growing up and the grandparent is growing old. The mind of the young is sharp, serious, and sober. The mind of the grandparent is waning, wondering, and wise. Still, both grands see each other as either the way that they will be, or the way that they once were. One sees himself in the future, the other in the past. To “commune” at this age is important for both, and to communicate can be a settling and satisfying time for both.

The home décor of the grandparent now should be full of pictures and objects that the grandchild can look upon in reminiscence. In the grandchild’s mind, the grandparent is the disciple of Christ, the one who has kept the faith, the one who will be going home to heaven soon.

Adult grandchildren can be, and in a sense should be, led to and through the Scriptures themselves, as the primary gospel tool of the grandparent. The first of two scriptural tools is, *“The Romans Road.”* The second tool is a personal step-by-step leading of one’s grandchild through the pages of the Bible. God’s speed and God’s grace to all who endeavor to still practice biblical fidelity and who strive to impart the unbelievable efficacy of the Word of God to the next generation’s generation.



Two sources provide some good hints for talking to adult grands. The first is written by Susan Adcox as she lists seven hints for communicating: "1) Build a foundation of good feelings. 2) Don't let family ties be an excuse for rudeness. 3) Think before you talk. 4) Don't make statements about how you raised your children. 5) Remember to listen. 6) Love your adult child as well as your grandchild. 7) Have faith that your child will do a good job."<sup>54</sup>

The second source is by Chuck Lynch as he discusses 10 ways adult Children can communicate in the context of being a Christian parent; yet, it also includes good ideas for the Christian grandparent: 1) Communicate adult-to-adult; 2) Respect their feelings, thoughts and opinions; 3) Make requests, not demands; 4) Stop using anger to control, to change or manipulate; 5) Encourage them often; 6) Listen more, talk less; 7) Stay focused on one topic at a time; 8) Avoid all devaluating patterns; And 9 and 10:

**Admit you have struggles, too:** Nothing deepens relationships faster than for parents to acknowledge their own disappointments and frustrations in life. Admit they have made some poor decisions in the past. Acknowledge they still struggle in some areas. The Apostle Paul demonstrated his vulnerability when he told the Corinthian church with whom he spent 18 months that, "I was with you in weakness, in fear and in much trembling" (I Cor. 2:3). They probably never would have known that had he not shared it. Be open for your kids to ask you questions and receive honest answers about past parenting. Be open and honest about your own history with your parents and grandparents. God does not waste history, ours or others'. Your past is the frame around your life. It will help your kids have a deeper appreciation of who you are today.

**Acknowledge you are fellow pilgrims:** Nothing opens the door of your kids' hearts for you more than admitting you are a fellow pilgrim and learner just like they are. This levels the playing field from a parent-to-child level to an adult-to-adult level. True, you have a wealth of life experience that they don't have. Admit to them that the more you know, the more you realize how little you

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<sup>54</sup> Susan Adcox, "7 Hints for Communicating with Adult Grandchildren," *About Parenting*, accessed July 25, 2015, <http://grandparents.about.com/od/grandparentingissues/tp/Grandparenting-Communication.htm>.

know. Understand that's where your kids are overwhelmed with life. Be transparent with your kids. You don't need to be strong. You need to be appropriately honest. This will open the doors for deeper communication on an adult-to-adult basis.<sup>55</sup>

### **The Communicating Grandparental Home**

A verbal witness is one thing, the "silent" witness of a grandparent's abode and is quite another. In some situations, and because of lots of different reasons, grandparents may have a limited, if not absolute, prohibition to discuss spiritual topics with grandchildren. The parents' wishes should be adhered and agreed to. However, that does not include the essence of where one resides. Symbolism can and does leave lasting impressions, and it is worthy of mentioning here. Mark Edwards has noted,

Protestants are inclined to underestimate the power of images in religion. Yet at the founding of Protestantism and in its early decades its leaders were very much aware of the power of religious images and did all they could either to remove the images entirely--the iconoclasts' solution--or to recast them in a way that exalted word over image.<sup>56</sup>

As well, "Religious symbolism is effective when it appeals to both the intellect and the emotions."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Chuck Lynch, "How to Communicate with your Grown Children," *Encouragement: the on-line magazine*, accessed July 25, 2015, [barnabas.org/downloadarticle.php?ar\\_id=30](http://barnabas.org/downloadarticle.php?ar_id=30).

<sup>56</sup> Mark U. Edwards, Jr., "The Power of a Picture: How Protestants imaged the gospel," *Christian Century* January 25, 2005, accessed July 26, 2015, <https://www.questia.com/magazine/1G1-128101790/the-power-of-a-picture-how-protestants-imagined-the-gospel>.

<sup>57</sup> EsIkevin, "Christian Symbols and their Meaning," *EsIkevin's Blog* December 4, 2012, accessed July 27, 2015, <https://esIkevin.wordpress.com/2012/12/04/christian-symbols-and-their-meaning/>.

But what are symbols. In Christianity, and for the grandparent who wishes to include a fair amount of symbols, pictures and objects in their homes that display their Christian faith, a brief description may suffice:

Communication element intended to represent or stand for a person, object, group, process, or idea. Symbols may be presented graphically (e.g., the cross for Christianity, or the light/dark halved circle for yin-yang) or representationally (e.g., Uncle Sam standing for the U.S., or a lion standing for courage). They may involve associated letters (e.g., C for the chemical element carbon), or they may be assigned arbitrarily (e.g., the mathematical symbol for infinity or the dollar symbol). Symbols are not a language of and by themselves; rather they are devices by which ideas often too complex or highly charged to articulate in ordinary language are transmitted between people sharing a common culture. Every society has evolved a symbol system that reflects a specific cultural logic; and every symbolism functions to communicate information between members of the culture in much the same way as, but more subtly than, conventional language. Though a symbol may take the discrete form of a wedding ring or a totem pole, symbols tend to appear in clusters and depend on one another for their accretion of meaning and value.<sup>58</sup>

What symbols are most prevalent in Scripture? In the Old Testament, there are “symbolic words, persons, objects, places, prophetic symbols and cultic symbolism.”<sup>59</sup> “Shalom,” “הוהי,” “Jehovah,” “God Almighty,” Moses with the 10 Commandments, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, Daniel in the Lion’s Den, Abraham, the Israelites passing through the Red Sea, Ruth and Naomi, David and Goliath, The Menorah, Star of David, angelic beings, and the Arc of the Covenant are just a few example of symbols that could be incorporated in the home of a discerning grandparent.

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<sup>58</sup> “Metaphor and Symbols,” *Myths-Dreams-Symbols*, January 3, 2005, accessed July 27, 2015, <http://www.mythsdreamssymbols.com/metaphorandsymbols.html>.

<sup>59</sup> Vernon H. Hooy, “Symbol, Symbolism,” *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*, vol.4 (New York, NY: Abingdon, 1962), 472-476.

As well, the New Testament includes words, persons, objects, places, prophetic symbols, and cultic symbolism, all of which revolve around the person of Jesus. Joseph and Mary, “Messiah,” “King of Kings,” “Son of God,” “Lamb of God,” “the Madonna,” Jesus smiling, being baptized, on the road to Emmaus, teaching, feeding the 5000, carrying a Lamb, carrying the cross, on the cross, resurrected, the ascension, Jesus knocking on the Hearts door, Angel’s directing Children, Star in the East, ἰηθούς, a Cross wall, The Apostles Creed, Praying Hands, and so on can be tastefully and strategically implemented in the home of the evangelical Christian grandparent.

The interest of this thesis-project lies in what symbols are effective at certain ages of grandchildren. The conscientious grandparent will consider what, where, and when certain pictures, symbols, objects, and wall decorations should go in what rooms. For example, gram’s living room could be where adults and late teens spend most of their time during their visits. This room should display some permanent non-age related articles such as a beloved picture of Christ, a Bible on the table, and praying hands on a wall. Kitchens are always gathering areas at most grandparents’ homes. So, a picture of da Vinci’s *The Last Supper*, or a small cross, or Enstrom’s *Old Man and Woman Praying*, might be a permanent decoration. Hallways might have the 10 Commandments or more classic pictures on the walls, such as Sallman’s *Christ Knocking at the Heart’s Door*, Zund’s *Christ on the Emmaus road*, or perhaps a plaque proclaiming the words of John 14:6. However, places like the nursery for the infant and toddler, play rooms for children, porches and rooms for the adolescent, and extra bedrooms for the early adult grand’s can all be “decorated” spiritually in an age-appropriate manner.

Of course, all decorations are simple “reinforcers” of the life that the grand is living out before the grandchild. Symbols in the form of pictures or objects are the tangible reminders and displays of the grandparent’s faith. It is important to keep in mind that symbols are the tangible objects that kids remember about gram and grandad’s home. A certain picture or object connects and continues to connect the grandchildren questions of faith with the answers that their grandparents tried to live out.

### **The Gospel Communicated**

As much as most grandparents would love to have their homes and lives talk for them when it comes to issues of faith, the reality is that the need exists to actually speak words in the listening ears of the should be, could be, “wanna-be” Christian grandchildren. Often times, grands can lean on the mystery of God in conversations. How was the world created in seven days? Who did Cain and Able marry? What does heaven look like? How did Noah get all those animals in the ark?

Yet, there are a few *must know*’s when it comes to the question, “How do you know there is a God?” Gentle admonitions such as, “Here is the one thing that I do know, and I want ever so badly for you to know it too.” A grandparent simply has to share what they do know, not what they do not know. For example, a grand may say, “I found the answer to my question about knowing there is a God in the Bible. It showed God’s idea of *how* to know Him, and it worked for me.”

Sincerity, patience, accompanied by a steadfast assurance in one's own faith, must be the grandparent's attitude when it comes to sharing the essentials of God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ with a grandchild. The question is then, how can one do this in an age-appropriate way for the grandchild to understand? And more, as the precious grandchild grows, are there ways to tell the same message in a different, more appealing, more substantive way? With this in mind, let's look at each age group and consider a primary gospel sharing tool appropriate for that age group.

#### Infants: Ages 0-2

(Suggested Primary Gospel Tool: *Yourself*)

According to Erikson, the infant needs to develop "trust." Can I trust the world? Cognitively, the infant learns through experiences. Morally, the infant is simply observing at this point. Faith development is primal, at best. The idea of trust and the virtue of hope are best learned as the infant is held, cuddled, fed, changed, rocked and spoken to in words and tones that reflect love and assurance. For grandparents, these are no-brainers. For the Christian Grandparent, they represent an opportunity for the infant to not only experience human love, but also for the infant to be introduced to the idea of hope and trust in God. A strategically placed picture of Jesus behind a rocking chair "introduces" and associates the person on the wall with the person in the chair. This is simple, but effective. At naptime, grands can hold the infant while saying soothing words such as, "God loves you," or gently singing "Jesus loves me." Playing low Christian music in the background can also be effective.

## Toddlers: Ages 2-4

(Suggested Primary Gospel Tool: *Wordless Book*)<sup>60</sup>

According to Erickson, the toddler is struggling with being “autonomous,” or developing shame and doubt. Is it OK to be me? Most toddlers are pretty good at proclaiming their independence at this age! Cognitively, the toddler moves past the sensorimotor stage of learning through experience, to the pre-operational stage as imagination and memory develop. Morally, the toddler has reached stage one as Kohlberg contends is the “obedience and punishment orientation.” Regarding faith, toddlers have reached the intuitive projective stage where imagination and mystery are grasped and grappled with in a positive and fun way. Here is where the primary tool choice comes into play.

The *Wordless Book* allows the grandparent to tell the story of salvation through wonderfully imaginative terms and pictures such as “streets of gold,” “red as blood,” “black as sin,” and “white as snow.” The toddler uses his or her imagination that is part of the creative thinking at this age. So, the story can be a great adventure told by the grandparent who is becoming more a part of the trusted extended family. The grandparent may include a strategically-placed picture of Jesus playing with children, in the playroom or the place where most of the toddler’s toys are kept. Some supplemental tools include music, toys, first Bible, and picture books, all of which not

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<sup>60</sup> See Appendix B.

only keep the grandchild busy, but reinforce the attributes of the God who was described in the wordless book.

### Early Childhood: Ages 3-5

(Suggested Primary Gospel Tool: *God's Good News in Colors*)<sup>61</sup>

According to Erikson, kids at this age experience the new-found freedom of taking the initiative to move, to act and be, or to regress into feeling of guilt and uncertainty. Cognitively, kids are still in the obedience and punishment orientation stage. Moral development is the same level as the toddler. However, faith development has reached the mythical-literal stage where faith is captured in the stories that children hear and tell about God. It is the “telling part” that leads to the primary tool at this age.

The primary Gospel tool is *God's Good News in Color*. This presentation takes advantage of the *Wordless Book's* colorful and descriptive pages, but adds read-along words that the preschooler can use to participate in the telling of the story with the grand. Also, from a grandparent's point of view, lots of board games, memory games and role play can be a part of time at gram's house.

A grand might want to consider a few Old Testament “action” pictures, such as David and Goliath or Daniel in the Lion's Den, in the preschoolers play area or sleeping room.

### Childhood: Ages 5-12

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<sup>61</sup> See Appendix C.



(Suggested Primary Gospel Tool: *The Bridge Illustration*)<sup>62</sup>

Psychosocial-development during this age revolves around the child's ever-increasing desire to be competent in whatever they try. Just as these years can instill great confidence, they can also be a time of regression and falling into feelings of inferiority. "Can I make it in the world of things and people," is the existential question the child is innately dealing with. Grands need to be cheerleaders throughout this stage.

Cognitive development reaches the concrete operational stage where a logical and systematic, although egocentric, way of thinking becomes the norm. Moral development also increases as the young person now understands that people can have different viewpoints when considering the same topic. Feelings of right and wrong and of what has been passed down regarding issues of faith are part of the synthetic conventional stage of faith development. In other words, they are thinking for themselves in many areas, yet, not necessarily in areas as complex as the existence God. It is still pretty much a given that there is a God. This is when much more of whom a grandparent is as a Christian than what a grandparent says about their Christianity is more solidified in the child's mind.

The primary Gospel tool during this age takes advantage of the young person's desire to be competent. The tool is the *Bridge Illustration*. Although it comes in a tract form, it is much better presented on a piece of paper, or better yet, a napkin. The

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<sup>62</sup> See Appendix D.

preteen grandchild takes part in the presentation as the grandparent simply asks questions of the grandchild. The grandchild answers the questions while drawing literal figures on the paper that illustrate the answers to the questions that have been asked. This is more like asking the competent-seeking child to take part in a game, of sorts. Yet, the message of the Gospel is presented in a real and understandable way.

A Cross, or one or two preteen-oriented Christian posters, in the bedroom of the young person can play into the “thinking” aspect of this age group—especially if they have picked out the posters themselves. As toys are replaced by more modern technical devices, the savvy grandparent considers where the preteen will be plopping down most of the time during their stays. With this in mind, the TV or media room, back porch or basement should now be considered when wanting to place more Christian objects or pictures.

#### Adolescence: Ages 13-19

(Suggested Primary Gospel Tool: *The 4 Spiritual Laws*)<sup>63</sup>

As the preteen reaches the teenage years, many changes happen not only in the life of the teen, but in the relationships between teen and parent, and teen and grandparent. Significant relationships during these years are more peer-oriented, and grands need to accept the fact that the grandkids prefer the company of other kids. According to Erickson, the teen is searching for identity: who am I...who can I be? Also,

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<sup>63</sup> See Appendix E.

during this time, the teen's cognitive development becomes more mature as a formal operational stage of thinking logically as ideological thinking takes shape.

Morally, the teen passes through two stages of Kohlberg's development. Wanting to be a good person flows into wanting to do the right things in order to get the right feelings about self, others, and society. Morally, most teens are still in Fowler's stage three in which the church is the religious institution that the teen looks to for a model of godly behavior.

The primary Gospel tool during the teen years is the *4 Spiritual Laws*. *The Laws* play into the teen's idealism and the need for some concreteness in the ever-changing life of the teen. "This is the way, these are the steps, this is what you get, and this is what you can expect," are the key step-by-step issues described in this presentation of the Gospel that make sense to the one seeking directions in finding direction. The 10 Commandments, Jesus driving out the money changers, Moses dashing the 10 Commandments after coming down from Mt. Sinai are some decorating examples that may play into the teens mindset of "who can I be," in the sense that these people also struggled with trying to do the right thing.

#### Early Adulthood: Ages 20-39

(Suggested Primary Tool: *The Romans Road*<sup>64</sup> & *Bible Plan of Salvation*<sup>65</sup>)

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<sup>64</sup> See Appendix F.

<sup>65</sup> See Appendix G.

The young adult is on a quest to find love. "Can I love?" is the existential concern. Intimacy verses isolation is how Erikson describes this developmental period. These can be pretty lean times for grand-adult visits. Thus, the simple need is to be the same, strongly-perceived, consistent believer in Christ that the grand has observed for many years. Cognitively, young adults operate better in the formal operational stage than when they began in their teens. Morally, the adult-grand becomes more socio-centric, rather than egocentric in their thinking, and moral decisions are made from that particular viewpoint. Faith can and should be developing and deepening; or, it may be temporarily stagnant. However, the call for grandparents to be the loving Christian grandparents has never been as important as now, during these ages.

The primary Gospel tool for young adults is actually two sides of the same coin. They both take the grand-adult through the pages of the grandparent's Bible. Often, by this time, there is a perception that grandparents are "religious," or better yet, "holy." So, using the "holy" book adds credence to the conversation concerning the issues of faith. The *Romans Road* could be memorized and presented to the grandchild. Simply handing them a tract has little value. However, the simple Bible plan of salvation calls for the grand to have at least a cursory knowledge of Scripture to be able to keep one's train of thought going, while moving from John 3:16 to Revelation 3:20, and from Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Ephesians, to all Scripture in between. The goal of both is that the young adult find the love that they have been looking for, and to find the one true and faithful one who chooses to be their personal life mate and friend.

## **Conclusion**

In the first part of this chapter, we tried to describe what is going on in the body, mind, and soul of the grandchild through various age stages. The second part of this chapter dealt with issues of communication between grandparents and grandchildren in each age group. The third part considered the psychosocial, cognitive, moral and faith development addressed in the first part and presented “reasoned” or analytical suggestions as to which evangelical gospel tool could be most relevant and effective at each age level: infant, toddler, early childhood, childhood, adolescence, and young adult: Vis a vis, the first 40 years of life.

The next chapter contains the actual “How to Share Your Faith with Your Grandkids,” handbook itself as we will try to combine Chapter One’s “Influence of Grandparents” with Chapter Three’s “Understanding of Grandchildren.”

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PROJECT DESIGN

#### Introduction

This chapter is presented as it was in a group seminar. The seminar was a Friday evening, Saturday morning, and early Saturday afternoon. The program title is “Grand-Legacy: How to share your Faith in Christ with Your Grandchildren.” The original title, “Granny-Evangelism,” seemed too intimidating for most church members because it implies feelings of uncertainty and apprehension. But “Legacy” is inspiring, appealing, and worthy of consideration.

This chapter is divided into three parts that follow the format for the seminar: Part One is presented on Friday night. During this segment, the seminar time frame and outline is provided, followed by the pre-seminar survey. It will include a discussion time concerning both the general influence and the spiritual influence of grandparents.

The next segment offers a brief explanation of the measurement tools utilized for the material and covers the basics of Erikson’s Psychosocial Development, Piaget’s Cognitive Development, Kohlberg’s Moral Development, and Fowler’s Faith Development. However, the real emphasis for Friday evening deals with “The Legacy Home.” Participants will receive a home structure template, and they will be asked to consider the symbols, objects, and pictures they have in place already. This is followed by a discussion of the changing role of “decor” in the rooms where most of a grandchild’s time will be spent as that child matures. Various pictures, symbols, and

objects will be shown, and a time of group discussion will follow concerning possible locations and reasoning behind placements.

Part Two begins Saturday morning, and it will include a step-by-step walk through the first four age groups under consideration: Infants (0-2), Toddlers (2-4), Early Childhood (3-5) and Childhood (5-12). A “snapshot” view of the developmental stages of the child will provide the foundation for considering the expanding and changing décor questions. Supplementary gospel tools that enhance the Christian presence in the grandparental home will be listed. An introduction and explanation of the age-appropriate Primary Gospel tool will accompany the conclusion of each age group presentation. After a time of explanation and questions, the group will be asked to practice presenting the tool to one another.

Part Three will last from late morning through early Saturday afternoon. This final part of the seminar considers the same process, snapshots, décor, tools, and practice of the Primary Gospel tool for adolescents (13-19) and Young Adults (20-39). The last two items on the agenda include a covenant contract that asks the grandparent to covenant with God to share the message of the gospel using the Primary Gospel Tool, at each different age of their grandchild as the Lord provide the opportunity, and an exit survey. The seminar is intended to be discussion-driven and participation-oriented.

### **The Survey**

The entering survey consists of the following categories of questions: Theology (3, 9, 13, 16, 20), Influence (1, 8, 10, 12, 10), Evangelism (7, 11, 14, 17, 18), and General

Background questions (2, 4, 5, 6, 15). The surveys are numbered and the exit survey consist of the same questions in a different order. The goal is to see if the material presented in the seminar actually influenced a grandparent's viewpoint in any of the above mentioned areas. The hypothesis is that there will be slight changes in Background and Theology, and considerable changes in Influence and Evangelism.

### **Summary**

Parts one, two and three of the seminar should be able to at least spur some thought as to how a grandparent can take some practical steps in leaving a Christ-honoring legacy for their grandchildren. The house décor section in each age group provided suggestions for developing an ongoing, albeit "silent" witness, of the gospel for the grandchild from the grandparent. The supplementary suggestions are just a few of numerous possibilities for age-related Christian items just to have around the house. The primary gospel tool however was and is the most important of all the information provided. It's one thing to have your house whisper gospel truths in the ear of the grandchild, but it is quite another for the grandparent to make the commitment to actually sit down at the right time, at the right place, and at each age of transition that the grandchild goes through, to actually share in a real and verbal way the gospel message of salvation. The last item before the exit survey is intended to provoke the grandparent to make a commitment and a covenant between themselves and the Lord to actually be a Legacy maker.



**Grand-Legacy: How to Share Your Faith in Christ with Your Grandchildren**  
Seminar Schedule

**Part One: Friday Evening 6:30-9:00 PM**

6:30-6:45	Material introduction & Entering Survey
6:45-7:25	General and Spiritual Influence of Grandparents
7:30-8:05	Measurement Tools Erikson's Psychosocial Development Piaget's Cognitive Development Kohlberg's Moral Development Fowler's Faith Development
8:15-9:00	The "Legacy Home:" The Plan, The Pics, The Symbols, and The Objects.

**Part Two: Saturday Morning 9:00-11:30 AM**

8:30-9:00	Coffee and Pastries
9:00-10:15	Infants (0-2) Toddlers (2-4) Snapshots Legacy Home Décor Supplementary Tools Primary Gospel Tools: You & Wordless Book.
10:20-11:30	Early Childhood (3-5) Childhood (5-12) Snapshots Legacy Home Décor Supplementary Tools Primary Gospel Tools: God's Word in Color & The Bridge Illustration.

**Lunch**

**Part Three: Saturday Afternoon 12:00-2:30PM**

12:00-1:55	Adolescence (12-19) Young Adult (20-39) Snapshots Legacy Home Décor Supplementary Tools Primary Gospel Tools: The 4 Spiritual Laws, The Romans Road, Bible Plan.
2:00-2:30	Covenant Agreement Exit Survey

# Entering Survey

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ # of Grandchildren \_\_\_\_\_ Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

Key=Strongly Disagree    Disagree    Neutral    Agree    Strongly Agree

1. Grandparents should influence their grandchildren in the area of faith.  
SD    D    N    A    SA
2. Parents are better equipped to answer their children's questions regarding faith.  
SD    D    N    A    SA
3. "Word" of God or "word" of God. (Please circle one)
4. The order of importance in teaching children about Spiritual matters. (list 1-5)  
Pastor \_\_\_\_ Parents \_\_\_\_ Siblings \_\_\_\_ SS Teachers \_\_\_\_ Grandparents \_\_\_\_
5. I know and understand the Plan of Salvation as described in the Bible.  
SD    D    N    A    SA
6. Grand-teens aren't that interested in "Religious Subjects."  
SD    D    N    A    SA
7. The age at which I should stop insisting that my Grandchildren come to church with me. (Please circle one)  
(Never Insist) (0-2) (2-4) (3-5) (5-12) (12-19) (20-35) (Never Stop)
8. Religious Pictures, Symbols, Objects should be numerous, prominent, and noticeable in my home.  
SD    D    N    A    SA
9. Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven.  
SD    D    N    A    SA
10. I can begin to influence my grandchild for Christ at the age of: (Please circle one)  
(Not My place) (0-2) (2-4) (3-5) (5-12) (12-19) (20-35) (Every age)
11. It is important for me to share my faith in Christ with my Grandchildren.  
SD    D    N    A    SA
12. Infants and toddlers are too young to be influenced spiritually.  
SD    D    N    A    SA
13. Kids 6-12 don't need to know the **entire** Gospel message.

SA      D      N      A      SA

14. Adult grandchildren no longer need me to talk to them about Jesus Christ.

SD      D      N      A      SA

15. Parents should always be asked if grandparents want to talk about spiritual/religious topics with grandchildren.

SD      D      N      A      SA

16. I feel adequately prepared to talk about the Gospel with my grandchildren.

SD      D      N      A      SA

17. I am familiar with the following Gospel plans: (Please circle all that apply)

Wordless Book      Romans Road      The Bridge illustration  
God's Good News in Color      Four Spiritual Laws      Bible Plan of Salvation  
And MY favorite \_\_\_\_\_ (Only One)

18. As long as my grandchildren have religion...

SD      D      N      A      SA

19. Pictures of Jesus on the cross are just too violent for me to have on my walls.

SD      D      N      A      SA

20. Jesus is the only way that my grandchild has to get to heaven.

SD      D      N      A      SA

## Discussion Time: General & Spiritual Influences of Grandparents

### General Influence: (4 Questions)

**Question 1:** How many of you would agree that the role that your grandparents played and had in your life is a little different than the role you now occupy as a grandparent?

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, grandparents, particularly grandfathers, exerted considerable economic and social influence based on land ownership. Elder male landholders generally retained their land and authority over their families until they died. With industrialization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the standing of landholders was undermined. The power and authority once granted for experience and wisdom decreased. New technology often made the talents of the old appear obsolete. And the new economy offered an attractive alternative to young adults who, in the past, would have dutifully worked in the family enterprise. Increases in life expectancy increased the longevity of older family members, but they were likely to be chronically ill and require care. So the proportion of the tri-generational households increased significantly. While people honored the ideal of mutual support in families, unclear lines of authority often led to conflict and dissension....In 1900, over 60% of older adults lived with children; by 1962, that had dropped to 25%; and by 1975 it had dropped to only 14%. Older adults started viewing autonomy and leisure as the goals of their "golden years." They had no important economic role in family life, but neither did they pose a threat. Their independence meant that they could become friends and companions to their grandchildren. Experts counseled grandparents to strive for love and friendship with their grandchildren rather than demand respect and obedience. So rather than disciplining, grandparents cuddled, rather than speaking authoritatively they listened affectionately....Grandparents themselves feared of meddling in their children's and grandchildren lives. So that while the relationship, when it existed, could be very positive, it's limited and tenuous nature overall brought us to where we are today.<sup>1</sup>

**Question 2:** Do you remember what it felt like what you first heard the word Grand...?

The title of "grandparent" seems to be a bit more loaded. Perhaps it's because "grandparent" is often perceived to be synonymous with "old," which is considered a bad thing in our youth-obsessed culture. Grand-parenting is certainly about generations, but not necessarily about old age---especially

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<sup>1</sup> Bosak, "Grandparents Today."

today as active, educated, healthy baby boomers head into the grand- parenting years.<sup>2</sup>

The choice is to relish or relinquish. There are those who obviously relish the given, though not chosen, role of grandparent from the very beginning. Others gradually grow into the role and find an increasing confidence and comfort in interacting with both child and “grandchild” over time. Others simply choose to relinquish the role from the beginning, and they never really do come around to accept the responsibility and the privilege of occupying such a lofty title in another human beings life. Still others relish the role, but through circumstances that are often beyond their control, have to live as though they have relinquished it. Hard feelings with children, geographic distances, poor health, and senior living facilities are just a few reasons why some grandparents simply settle for only the title.

**Question 3:** Who would you guess has the most influence on grandchildren; grandfathers, grandmothers, or both?

A study in which 300 grandchildren who had at least one living grandparent were asked two pointed questions: 1) who is the grandparent that you had the most contact with? And 2) with which grandparent did you best get along? Overwhelmingly, grandchildren indicated they had the most contact with, and got long better with, the maternal grandparents. In addition, granddaughters within every age-group (<12, 12-15, 16+) chose maternal grandmothers as the appealing favorite for contact and intimacy. The same was true of grandsons until the age of 12. Then an interesting change occurred. Commenting on the results of the study, “Of greater significance however, we see a clear majority of grandsons aged 12 and over selecting maternal grandfathers (32 out of 56, 57.1 per cent) rather than maternal grandmothers (24 out of 56, 42.9 per cent) as the grandparent ‘they get on with best’.”<sup>3</sup>

**Question 4:** Do you as a grandparent really matter in the growing life of grandkids?

*The Foundation for Grandparenting* conducted a survey of families regarding their opinion of whether grandparents were an indispensable part of their family. Of the subjects interviewed, 77 percent of the subjects interviewed agreed that grandparents were indeed indispensable.

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<sup>2</sup> Bosak, “Grandparents Today.”

<sup>3</sup> Robin Mann, Hafiz T.A. Khan and George W. Leeson, “Age and Gender Difference in Grandchildren’s Relationships with their Maternal Grandfathers and Grandmothers,” *Oxford Institute of Aging Working Papers*, No.209, Ed. Kenneth Howse (February 2009).

## Spiritual Influence: (4 Questions)

**Question 1:** How many of you feel up to the task of being a spiritual Influence in the life of your grandchildren. Why or why not?

In an article in *Christianity Today*, Vern Bengtson states, “Due to increased life expectancy, grandparents today can and want to have a greater religious influence in the lives of their grandchildren. Almost 4 in 10 of the grandchildren were in the same faith tradition as their grandparents.”<sup>4</sup> He then points out the fact that many grandchildren experience, but few understand the causes:

However, sometimes there is a ‘skipped generation’ effect, where grandchildren emulate the faith of a grandparent instead of a parent's example. For instance, we studied the Sabelli family, whose great-grandfather Leo was a warm, charismatic figure. Though his children had rocky marriages and were not strong faith role models, the grandchildren remember him as the strength and rock of the family. Granddaughter Shari Sabelli, now 58 years old, recalls sitting in the pew with her grandpa, a red carnation in his lapel; the same ritual week after week made the church a place where she felt secure. That kind of grandparental influence that reaches back five decades is quite dramatic.<sup>5</sup>

The “skipped generation” is a phenomenon that is complicated to understand. Perhaps, one factor could be that grandparents and grandchildren share the same problem in their lives—the son or daughter and the mom or dad. Still, there seems to be a shared “spiritual connection” between the generations that both grandchild and grandparent enjoy.

**Question 2:** How do you think grandparents are doing in the area of influence these days?

George Barna offers,

Of Americans in the mid-1990s, “women are twice as likely to attend a church service during any given week.” Women are also 50 percent more likely than men to say they are “religious” and to state that they are “absolutely committed” to the Christian faith.’ The differences seem to be increasing rapidly. In 1992, 43 percent of men attended church; in 1996, only 28 percent.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Amy Zietlow, “Religion Runs in the Family,” *Christianity Today* (August 2013), accessed May 19, 2015. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/august-web-only/religion-runs-in-family.html?start=1>.

<sup>5</sup> Zietlow, “Religion Runs in the Family.”

<sup>6</sup> George Barna, *Index of Leading Spiritual Indicators* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1996), 76.

The problem this brings to the forefront obviously is, if fathers and grandfathers are neglecting church service, how they are maintaining a healthy, mature Christian walk of faith. And as such, how much will they really be interested in, or feel equipped to, influence their grandchildren (or others for that matter) with the message of the Gospel? Nevertheless, there are men who deeply love the Lord, and although they may have reached the “remnant” status in number concerning church attendance, they still have and cherish their unique role of Christian grandfather.

Family life is like a relay and, grandmother; your grandchildren are standing at the line with their hands reaching back expectantly, eager for you to hand off the truth about the Lord. May you say along with the apostle Paul – I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace. You must run this race with persistence and perseverance all the while praying and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to open the hearts of your grandchildren to accept the truth you relate to them. As a grandmother you can encourage your grandchildren through your love, prayers and example of faith and pass on a rich spiritual heritage to the next generation.<sup>7</sup>

There is a reality that must be faced: grandmothers, at this point in history, are the family key to keeping the Gospel of Christ alive in the hearts of the grandchildren who constitute the current generation, and those who will come.

**Question 3:** How do you think your grandchildren perceive you as a Christian Grandparent?

How do grandchildren perceive that their grandparents know God? In a John Brown University study of 40 children, the answer was threefold. First, they perceived that their grandparents knew God because they prayed, and prayed a lot. Second, by the stories their grandparents told them over the years, they came to believe that their grandparents knew God on a personal level. Third, the way that their grandparents lived; going to church, emphasizing, talking and sharing things about God with them.<sup>8</sup>

Certainly, the connection between the way that grandparents talk about God, and the way they live out their lives of faith in God, does not go unnoticed by their grandchildren. Perhaps, the best way for grandparents to approach the area of becoming an influencer for the Gospel is to live it and to talk about it.

**Question 4:** Can I as a Grandparent really make that much of a difference?

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<sup>7</sup> Linda Linder, “A Grandmother’s Kingdom Work,” *Today’s Godly Woman Blog*, accessed June 13, 2015, <http://www.chatradio.org/devotion/PrayingGrandmas.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> Holly Chatterton Allen and Heidi Schultz, “The Spiritual Influence of Grandparents,” *CEJ: Series 3*, Vol.5, No.2 (2008): 346-362, accessed May 23, 2015, <http://Journals.biola.edu/ns/cej/volumes/5/issues/2/articles/346>.

The last role is that of being a strong spiritual guide for our grandchildren. Coyle states that it's an honor to be a part of what Margaret Guenthur calls "soul-making." "We need spiritual grannies and grandpas who have the time and the wisdom to wait patiently in out-of-the-way places of the spirit and quietly bring new things to birth in others. This is the challenge to all of us who have grandchildren."<sup>9</sup>

The question is not so much, "Can grandparents be influencing entities?" They have been, are, and will be through most of their lives. The real question is, "How will one go about influencing grandchildren with the things that matter most?" And for the Christian grandparent this should be real food for thought. What shall it profit a man if he gains everything and yet, loses his soul? Perhaps we should ask, "What shall it profit us as grandparents if we gain a grandchild on this earth and do nothing to help them know the way to heaven?"

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<sup>9</sup> Cloyd, *Parents and Grandparents*, 101.



### Measurement Tools

The idea here is not to go into an in-depth conversation about each of the measuring tools that were used in studying the development of grandchildren, but rather, to introduce some basic ideas about growth and change in the life of the precious grandchild.

Approximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
0-2 years	Hope	Basic trust vs. mistrust	Mother	Can I trust the world?	Feeding, abandonment
2-4 years	Will	Autonomy vs. shame and doubt	Parents	Is it okay to be me?	Toilet training, clothing themselves
4-5 years	Purpose	Initiative vs. guilt	Family	Is it okay for me to do, move, and act?	Exploring, using tools or making art
5-12 years	Competence	Industry vs. inferiority	Neighbors, school	Can I make it in the world of people and things?	School, sports
13-19 years	Fidelity	Identity vs. role confusion	Peers, role model	Who am I? Who can I be?	Social relationships
20-39 years	Love	Intimacy vs. isolation	Friends, partners	Can I love?	Romantic relationships
40-64 years	Care	Generativity vs. stagnation	Household, workmates	Can I make my life count?	Work, parenthood
65-death	Wisdom	Ego integrity vs. despair	Mankind, my kind	Is it okay to have been me?	Reflection on

Table 9. Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Development

Stage of Development	Key Feature	Research Study
Sensorimotor 0 - 2 yrs.	Object Permanence	Blanket & Ball Study
Preoperational 2 - 7 yrs.	Egocentrism	Three Mountains
Concrete Operational 7 – 11 yrs.	Conservation	Conservation of Number
Formal Operational 11yrs +	Manipulate ideas in head, e.g. Abstract Reasoning	Pendulum Task

Table 10. Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development

<b>Pre-conventional Level</b>	
1. Actions are determined to be good or bad depending on how they are rewarded or punished.	Example: It would be bad for me to take my friend's toy because the teacher will punish me.
2. The exchange principle enters the picture at this level, and we treat with fairness those who do the same with us or those who can help us.	Example: If Katy is nice to me, I'll be nice to her, but if she is mean to me, I won't feel bad about being mean too.
<b>Conventional Level</b>	
3. The morality of an action depends heavily on peer approval.	Example: I better not drink and drive because my friends will think less of me and I, in turn, will think less of myself.
4. How moral an action is depends on how well it conforms to society's rules; the emphasis at this level is on maintaining social order.	Example: I am personally against the war, but would never publicly protest it on campus without the administration's permission.
<b>Post-Conventional Level</b>	
5. Moral behavior at this level might include arguing in favor of customs or laws being changed in order to preserve the health of the society; blind obedience is more forcefully questioned and cultural differences in what is considered to be ethical behavior are recognized.	Example: It can't be right that huge corporations sometimes pay no taxes; that law needs to be changed, so that the burden of taxes falls more equally on everyone's shoulders.
6. At this level, people follow a moral code based on universal principles that grant all individuals certain basic rights. Society's rules take a back seat if they contradict those principles, as was the case with those who challenged slavery even when the law allowed it.	Example: I refuse to obey a law which treats a large portion of the population as second-class citizens.

Table 11. Lawrence Kohlberg's Moral Development

Level	~Ages	Name	Characteristics
Stage 1	3-7	Intuitive-predictive	Egocentric, becoming aware of time. Forming images that will affect their later life.
Stage 2	6-12	Mythical-literal	Aware of the stories and beliefs of the local community. Using these to give sense to their experiences.
Stage 3	12-	Synthetic-conventional	Extending faith beyond the family and using this as a vehicle for creating a sense of identity and values.
Stage 4	early adult	Individuative-reflective	The sense of identity and outlook on the world are differentiated and the person develops explicit systems of meaning.
Stage 5	adult	Conjunctive	The person faces up to the paradoxes of experience and begins to develop universal ideas and becomes more oriented towards other people.
Stage 6	adult	Universalizing	The person becomes totally altruistic and they feel an integral part of an all-inclusive sense of being. This stage is rarely achieved.

Table 12. James Fowlers Faith Development

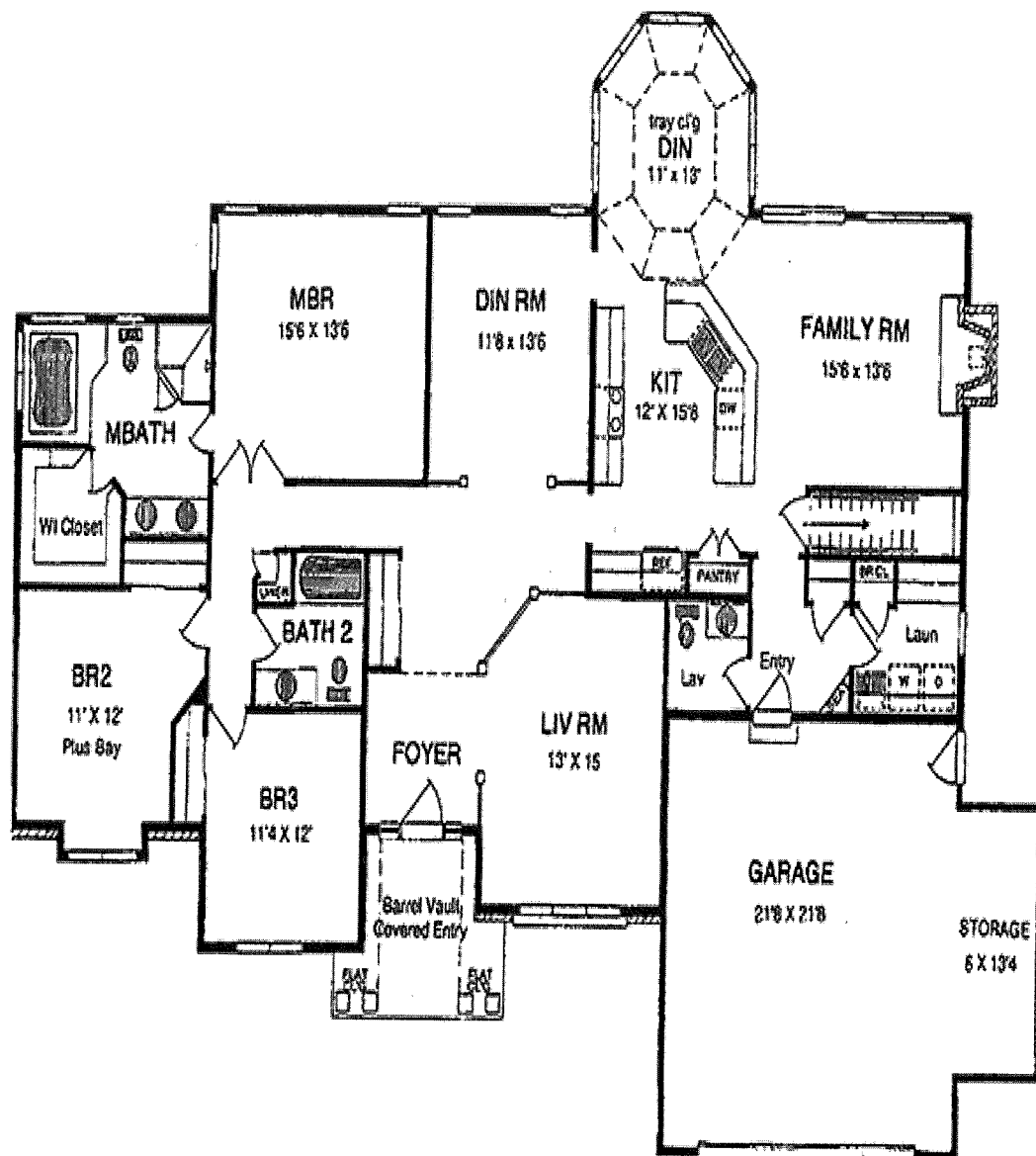


Figure 1. The Legacy Home

### Beginning Exercise

In our mind's eye, I want us to walk through each room in our houses, beginning as we enter the front door in order to notice the religious symbols, objects, or pictures in each room. Maybe there is a Cross in the front entry way? Maybe a Bible in the living room? Any plaques in the hallway? In your master bedroom, are there pictures of the kids? A picture of Jesus on the cross? In the other bedrooms, are there any books that talk of religious things? Pictures, keepsakes, olive wood figures? In the bathrooms, are there magazines or devotionals? In the kitchen, is there a picture of people praying grace? Daily memory cards on the table? Now come back to the doorway and look around. Think about things such as this: When my family comes over, where do we spend the most time? If my kids stay, which room do they sleep in? If my grandchildren come, is this the place where they hang out the most? This is the room where they spend the night. Now, ask yourself the question, is my house telling my family that I walk with God. Is my faith on display? If not, why? How can I be proactive in providing a silent witness to my faith in the places where my family spends the most time while they are here.

#### Religious Symbols, Objects, Pictures

What about religious symbols and things? Are they really effective? Let me read a little excerpt from the Thesis-Project concerning symbols and pictures:

What symbols are most prevalent in the scriptures? In the Old Testament there are "symbolic words, persons, objects, places, prophetic symbols and cultic symbolism."<sup>10</sup> "Shalom," "הוהי," "Jehovah," "God Almighty" Moses with the 10

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<sup>10</sup> Vernon H. Hooy. "Symbol, Symbolism," *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*, vol.4 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), pp.472-476.

Commandments, The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, Daniel in the Lion's Den, Abraham, The Israelites passing through the Red Sea, Ruth and Naomi, David and Goliath, The Menorah, Star of David, angelic beings, and the Arc of the Covenant are a few examples of symbols that could be incorporated in the home of the discerning grandparent.

The New Testament includes the same words, persons, objects, places, prophetic symbols and cultic symbolism all of which surround the person of Jesus. Joseph and Mary, "Messiah," "King of Kings," "Son of God," "Lamb of God," "the Madonna," Jesus smiling, being baptized, on the road to Emmaus, teaching, feeding the 5000, carrying a Lamb, carrying the cross, on the cross, resurrected, the ascension, Jesus knocking on the Hearts door, Angel's directing Children, Star in the East, ἰησοῦς, a Cross wall, The Apostles Creed, Praying Hands, and so on can be tastefully and strategically implemented in the home of the evangelical Christian Grandparent.

The interest of this thesis-project lies in what symbols are effective at certain ages of grandchildren. The conscientious grandparent will consider what and where and when certain pictures, symbols, objects, wall decorations, and so on should go in what rooms. Such as, gram's living room could be where adult and late teens spend most of their time during their visits. Here should be some permanent non-age related articles such as a beloved picture of Christ, a Bible on the table, and praying hands on a wall. Kitchens are always gathering areas at most grandparents' homes. Thus, a picture of da Vinci's, *the Last Supper*, or a small cross, or Enstrom's, *Old Man and Woman Praying*, might be a permanent decoration. Hallways might have the 10 Commandments or more classic pictures such as Sallman's, *Christ knocking at the heart's Door*, Zund's, *Christ on the Emmaus road*, or perhaps a plaque proclaiming the words of John 14:6. However, places like the nursery for the infant and toddler, play rooms for children, porches and rooms for the adolescent, and extra bedrooms for the early adult grand's can all be "decorated" spiritually in an age-appropriate manner.

All decorations, of course, are simple reinforcers of the life that the grand is living out before the grandchild. Symbols in pictures or objects are the tangible reminders and displays of the grandparent's faith. The thing to keep in mind is; symbols are the real things that kids remember about gram and grandad's home. A certain picture, certain objects, connect and continue to connect the grandchildren's questions of faith with the answers that their grandparents tried to live out.

## Part Two (Saturday 9:00-11:30 AM)

### Infants (Ages: 0-2)

**Snapshot: "Grand-Baby"**

**Psychosocial:**

Approximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
0-2 years	Hope	Basic trust vs. mistrust	Mother	Can I trust the world?	Feeding, abandonment

**Cognitive:**

Stage of Development	Key Feature	Research Study
Sensorimotor 0 - 2 yrs.	Object Permanence	Blanket & Ball Study

**Moral:** Pre-Pre Conventional

**Faith:** Pre-Stage 1

Questions to consider: What stands out in the Psychosocial Development table? The virtue of 'Hope?' The crisis? The significant relationship? Or the existential question? Cognitively, babies live and think in the here and now.

Morally, the infant is simply observing at this point. Faith development is primal at best. But the idea of trust and the virtue of hope are best learned as the infant is held, cuddled, fed, changed, rocked and spoken too in words and tones that reflect love and assurance. For the grandparents these are no-brainers. For the Christian Grandparent, they represent an opportunity for the infant to not only experience human love, but also for the infant to be introduced to the idea of hope and trust in God. A strategically placed picture of Jesus behind a rocking chair "introduces" and associates the person on the wall with the person in the chair. Simple, but effective. At naptime Grands can hold the infant while saying soothing words such as, "God loves you," or gently singing "Jesus loves me." Playing low Christian music in the background can also be effective. With that said let's consider the Legacy Home...



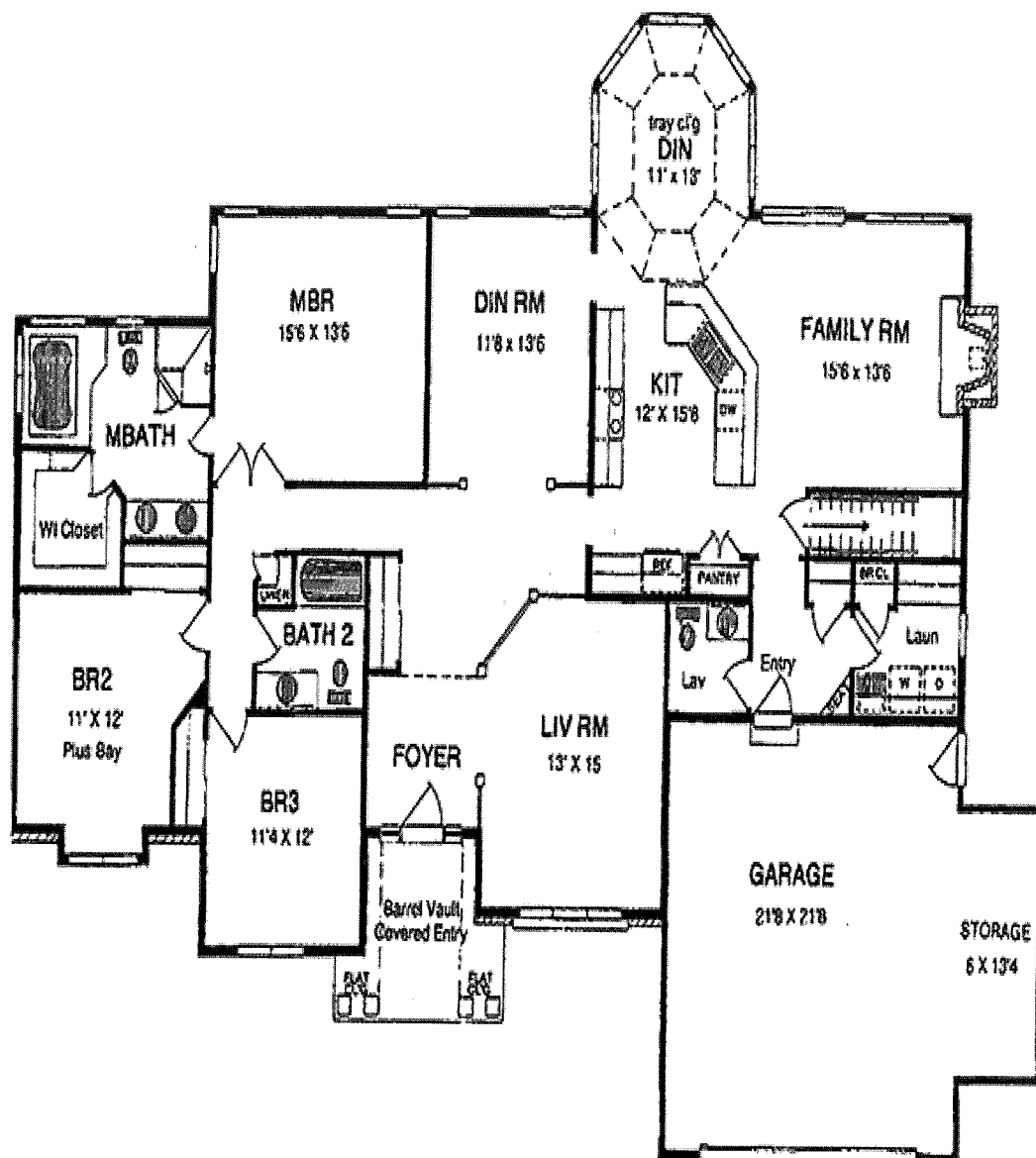


Figure 2. The Legacy Home – Grand-Babies

**Initial Legacy Questions:** (X) the rooms where grandchild(ren) will be spend most time. Place (X) where grandchild(ren) will be sleeping. Questions to consider: In which room will the baby spend the most time in? Where will the baby, mom and dad sleep? What are some things I can place or put in this/these room(s) to introduce my grand-baby to Christ?"

**Main "Legacy" Décor:** Picture of Christ

**Supplementary Gospel Tools:** Age- Appropriate (0-2) Christian Picture Books (Appendix H), toys, music.

**Primary Gospel Tool:** YOU

Primary tool sharing exercise.

### Toddlers (Ages: 2-4)

Snapshot: "Grand-Toddler"

Psychosocial:

Approximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
2–4 years	Will	Autonomy vs. shame and doubt	Parents	Is it okay to be me?	Toilet training, clothing themselves

Cognitive:

Stage of Development	Key Feature	Research Study
Sensorimotor 0 - 2 yrs.	Object Permanence	Blanket & Ball Study
Preoperational 2 - 7 yrs.	Egocentrism	Three Mountains

Moral:

Pre-conventional Level	
1. Actions are determined to be good or bad depending on how they are rewarded or punished.	Example: It would be bad for me to take my friend's toy because the teacher will punish me.

Faith:

Level	~Ages	Name	Characteristics
Stage 1	3-7	Intuitive-predictive	Egocentric, becoming aware of time. Forming images that will affect their later life.

**Discussion:** According to Erickson, the toddler is struggling between being “autonomous,” or developing shame and doubt. Is it OK to be me? And most toddlers are pretty good at proclaiming their independence at this age! Cognitively, the toddler is moving past the sensorimotor stage of learning through experience, to the pre-operational stage as imagination and memory are being developed. Morally, the toddler has reached stage one as Kohlberg contends is the “obedience and punishment orientation.” Faith wise, toddlers have reached the intuitive projective stage where imagination and mystery are grasped and grappled with in a positive and fun way.

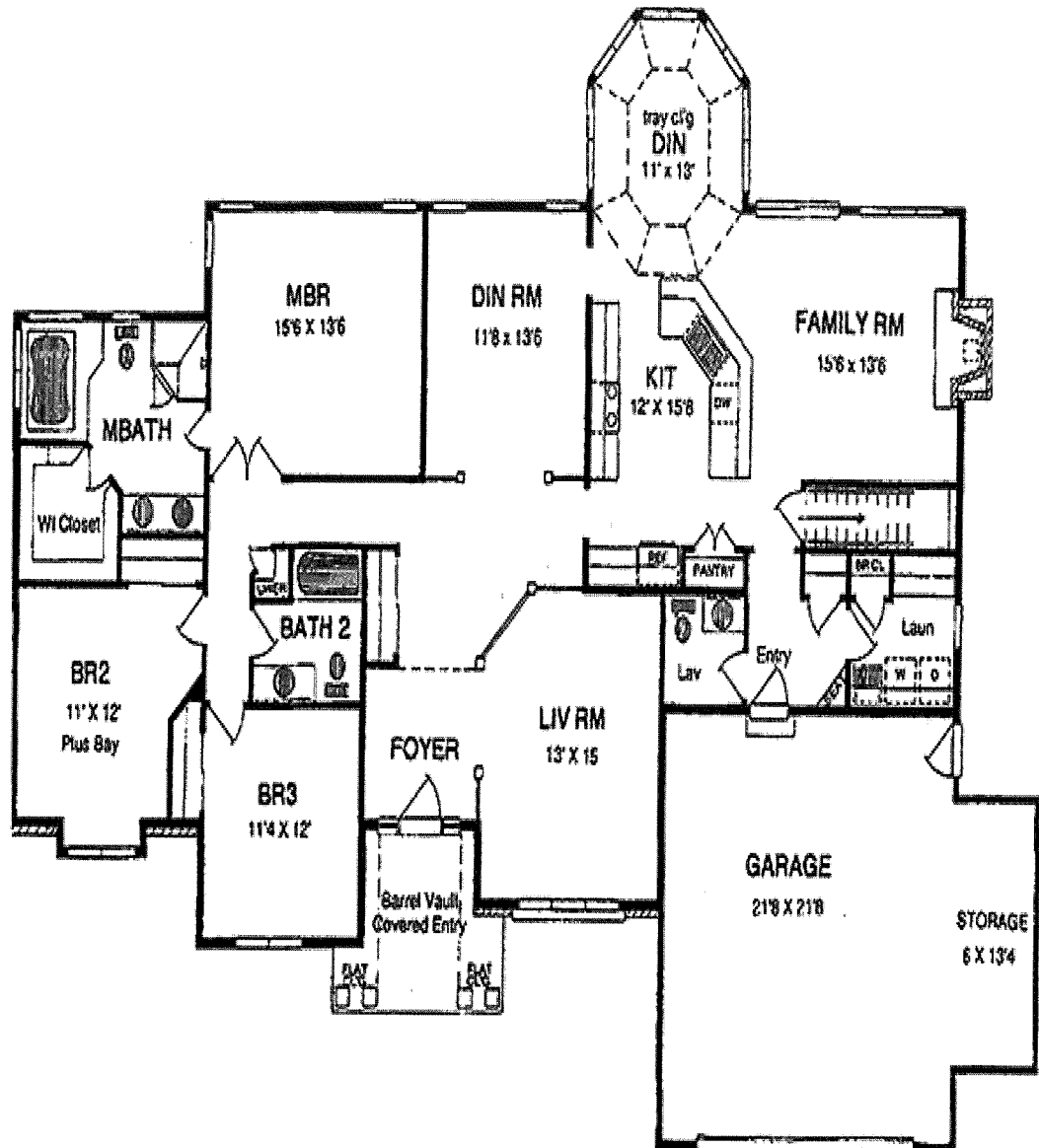


Figure 3. The Legacy Home: Grand-Toddlers

**Initial Legacy Questions:** (X) the rooms where grandchild(ren) will be spend most time. Place (X) where grandchild(ren) will be sleeping. Toddlers now will be present in more areas of the home. The rocking chair of the infant will still be in use. Yet, now a play area will have to be considered along with the room where the toddler will take and nap and sleep.

**Main Legacy décor:** Jesus playing with Children, Angels.

**Supplementary Gospel Tools:** Age- Appropriate (2-4) Christian Picture Books (Appendix H), toys, plush animals, Nap-time CD's, DVD's. 1<sup>st</sup> Bible.

### Primary Gospel Tool: Wordless Book (Appendix B)

The *Wordless Book* allows the grandparent to tell the story of salvation through wonderfully imaginative terms and pictures such as “streets of gold,” “red as blood,” “black as sin,” and “white as snow.” The toddler uses his or her imagination that is part of the creative thinking at this age. The story thus can be a great adventure told by the grandparent who is becoming more a part of trusted extended family. The grandparent may include a strategically placed picture of Jesus playing with children, in the playroom or the place where most of the toddler’s toys are kept. Some supplemental tools include music, toys, 1<sup>st</sup> Bible, and picture books, all of which not only keep the grandchild busy, but reinforce the attributes of the God who was described in the wordless book.

### Primary tool sharing exercise.

#### Early Childhood (Ages: 3-5)

##### Snapshot: “Grand-Preschooler”

##### Psychosocial:

Approximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
2–4 years	Will	Autonomy vs. shame and doubt	Parents	Is it okay to be me?	Toilet training, clothing themselves
4–5 years	Purpose	Initiative vs. guilt	Family	Is it okay for me to do, move, and act?	Exploring, using tools or making art

##### Cognitive:

Stage of Development	Key Feature	Research Study
Sensorimotor 0 - 2 yrs.	Object Permanence	Blanket & Ball Study
Preoperational 2 - 7 yrs.	Egocentrism	Three Mountains

**Moral:** (Same as Toddler)

Pre-conventional Level	
1. Actions are determined to be good or bad depending on how they are rewarded or punished.	Example: It would be bad for me to take my friend's toy because the teacher will punish me.

**Faith:** Beginning stages

Level	~Ages	Name	Characteristics
Stage 1	3-7	Intuitive-predictive	Egocentric, becoming aware of time. Forming images that will affect their later life.

**Discussion:** According to Erikson, kids at this age are experiencing the new found freedom of taking the initiative to move, act and be, or to regress into feeling of guilt and uncertainty. Cognitively, kids are still working through the imagination and memory phase. Moral development is the same level as the toddler. However, faith development has reached the waning end of the intuitive projective stage where imagination and mystery are grasped and grappled with in a positive and fun way. A grandparent might want to put a few Old Testament “action” pictures, such as David and Goliath or Daniel in the Lion’s Den, in the preschoolers play area or sleeping room.

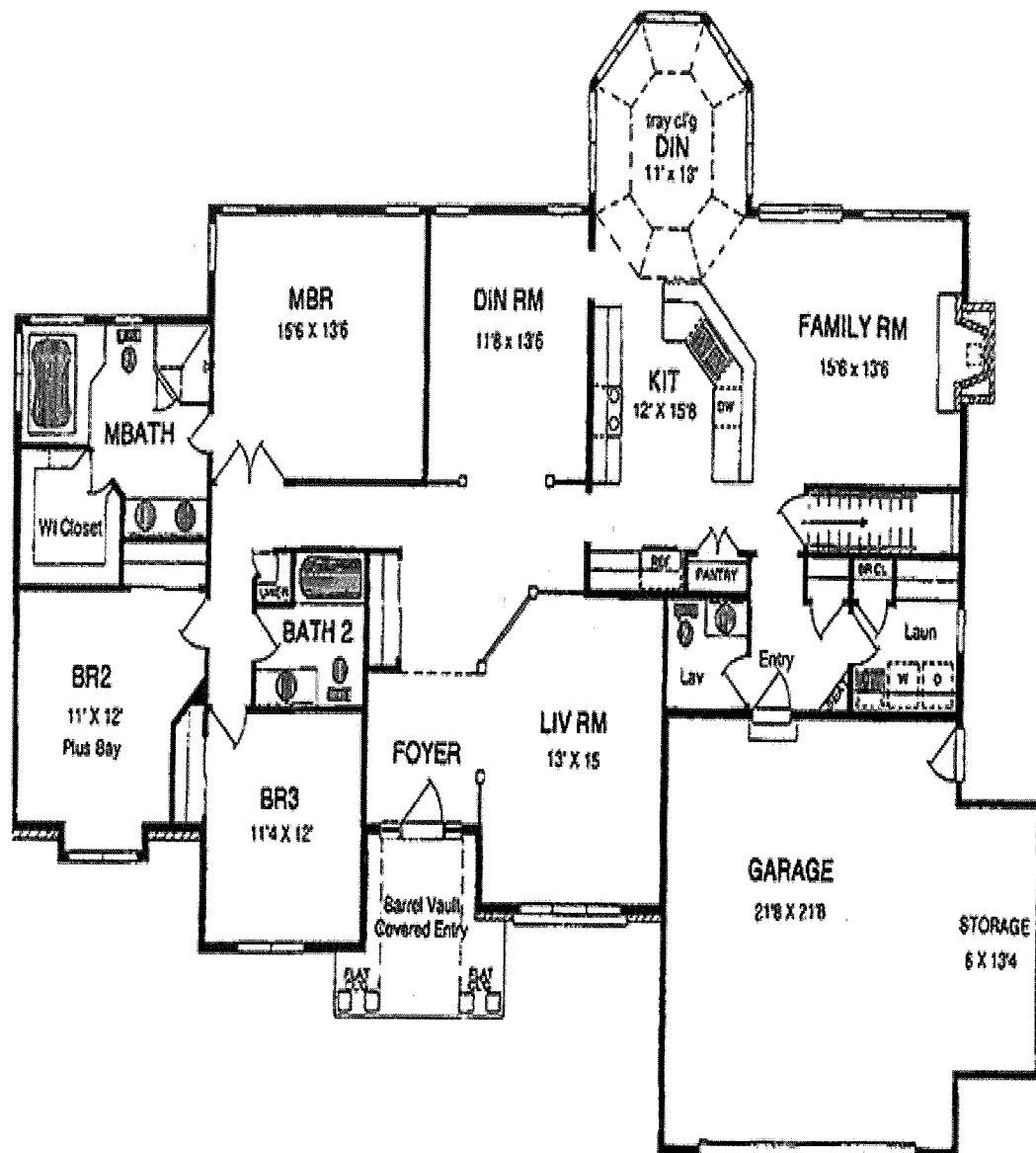


Figure 4. The Legacy Home: Grand-Preschoolers

**Initial Legacy Questions:** (X) the rooms where grandchild(ren) will be spend most time. Place (X) where grandchild(ren) will be sleeping. Along with the play area and the sleeping room, additional décor challenges occur in the bathroom and kitchen. Kids are not only bathing, but utilizing the restroom by themselves. Also, the preschooler is probably going to be in the kitchen on more occasions.

**Main Legacy Décor:** Along with the pictures of Christ displayed as an infant, and the Jesus playing with kids in the toddler age, now a few Old Testament “action” pictures such as David and Goliath could be placed in play areas or sleeping rooms.

**Supplementary Gospel Tools:** Age- Appropriate (3-5) Christian Picture Books (Appendix H), toys, Nap-time CD's, Action DVD's, Veggatales, dress-up; role playing, memory games.

**Primary Gospel Tool:** God's Good News in Color (Appendix C)

The Primary Gospel tool is, *The God's Good News in Color*. This presentation *takes* advantage of the *Wordless Book's* colorful and descriptive pages, but also adds read-along words that the preschooler can participate in as both grand and grandchild tell the story. Also from a grandparent's point of view, lots of board games, memory games and role play can be a part of time at gram's house.  
Primary tool sharing exercise.

### Childhood (Ages: 5-12)

**Snapshot:** "Grand-kid"

**Psychosocial:**

Approximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
5–12 years	Competence	Industry vs. inferiority	Neighbors, school	Can I make it in the world of people and things?	School, sports

**Cognitive:**

Stage of Development	Key Feature	Research Study
Concrete Operational 7 – 11 yrs.	Conservation	Conservation of Number



**Moral:**

Pre-conventional Level	
1. Actions are determined to be good or bad depending on how they are rewarded or punished.	Example: It would be bad for me to take my friend's toy because the teacher will punish me.
2. The exchange principle enters the picture at this level, and we treat with fairness those who do the same with us or those who can help us.	Example: If Katy is nice to me, I'll be nice to her, but if she is mean to me, I won't feel bad about being mean too.

**Faith: Beginning Stages of stage 3**

Stage 2	6-12	Mythical-literal	Aware of the stories and beliefs of the local community. Using these to give sense to their experiences.
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**Discussion:** Psychosocial-development during this age revolves around the child's ever increasing desire to be competent in whatever they try. Just as these years can instill a great confidence, they can also be a time of regression and falling into feelings of inferiority. "Can I make it in the world of things and people," is the existential question the child is innately dealing with. Grands need to be cheerleaders throughout this stage.

Cognitive development reaches the concrete operational stage where logical, though limited and systematic thinking occurs. Egocentric thinking becomes the norm. Moral development also increases as the young person now understands that people can have different viewpoints when considering the same topic. Feeling of right and wrong and what has been passed down regarding issues of faith are part of the mythical-literal stage of faith development. In other words, they are thinking for themselves in many areas, yet, not necessarily in areas as complex as the existence God. It's still pretty much a given that there is. Here is where much more of whom a grandparent is as a Christian than what a grandparent says about their Christianity is more solidified in the child's mind.

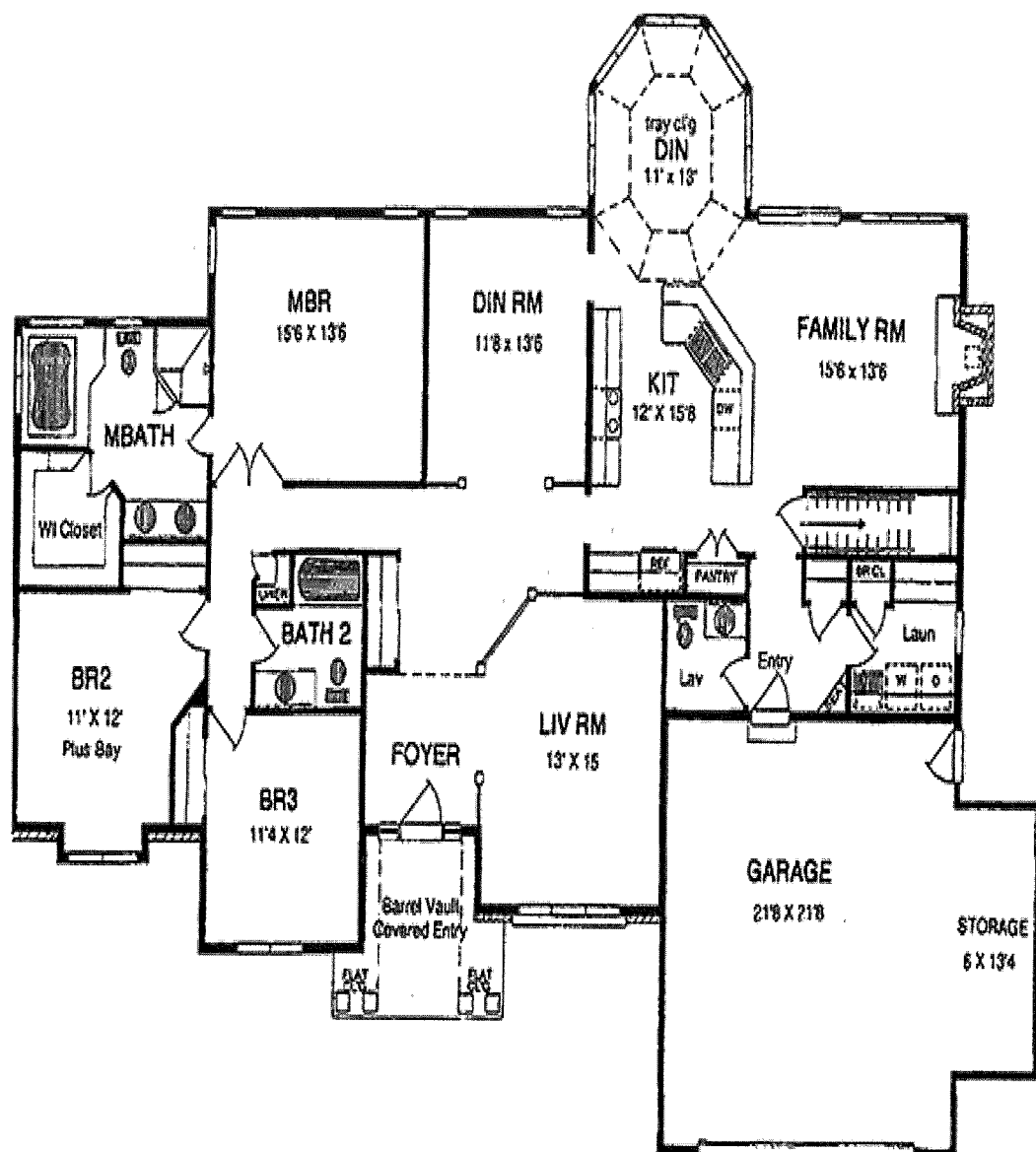


Figure 5. The Legacy Home: Grand-Kids

**Initial Legacy Questions:** (X) the rooms where grandchild(ren) will be spend most time. Place (X) where grandchild(ren) will be sleeping.

Living Rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, family rooms, porches and even garages now need thoughtful consideration as far as age-appropriate décor. A Cross, one or two preteen-oriented Christian posters, in the bedroom of the young person can play into the "thinking" aspect of the age group—especially if they have picked out the posters themselves. Also, as toys are replaced by more modern technical devices, the savvy grandparent considers where beside the sleeping quarters the preteen will be plopping down most of the time during their stays. And as such the TV, or media room, back

porch or basement should now be considered when wanting to place more Christian object or pictures.

**Main Legacy décor:** Cross symbols, plaques of all sorts; “Jesus Saves”, Christian age-appropriate posters and other decorations can now be strategically and tastefully placed in the home. The house décor does not need complete do overs, just a few added items during each age level. The goal is to provide a consistent and permanent witness with a growing but not overwhelming array of notable and noticeable additions.

**Supplementary Gospel Tools:** Age- Appropriate (7-12) Christian Books (Appendix H), some older toys but mainly games, Christian music, Flannel Boards, Flash Cards, and DVD’s.

**Primary Gospel Tool:** The Bridge Illustration (Appendix D)

The Primary Gospel tool during this age takes advantage of the young person’s desire to be competent. The tool is the Bridge Illustration. And although it comes in a tract form, it is much better presented on a piece of paper or better yet, a napkin. The preteen grandchild takes part in the presentation as the grandparent simply asks questions of the grandchild who in turn draws conclusions as well as literal figures that illustrate the answer to the question that has been asked. It’s more like asking the competent-seeking child to take part in a game of sorts. Yet, the message of the Gospel is presented in a real and understandable way.

**Primary tool sharing exercise.**

### Part Three (Saturday 12:00-2:30 PM)

#### Adolescence (Ages: 13-19)

##### Snapshot: "Grand-Teen"

##### Psychosocial:

Approximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
13–19 years	Fidelity	Identity vs. role confusion	Peers, role model	Who am I? Who can I be?	Social relationships

##### Cognitive:

Stage of Development	Key Feature	Research Study
Formal Operational 11yrs +	Manipulate ideas in head, e.g. Abstract Reasoning	Pendulum Task

##### Moral:

Conventional Level	
3. The morality of an action depends heavily on peer approval.	Example: I better not drink and drive because my friends will think less of me and I, in turn, will think less of myself.

##### Faith:

Level	~Ages	Name	Characteristics
Stage 3	12-	Synthetic-conventional	Extending faith beyond the family and using this as a vehicle for creating a sense of identity and values.

**Discussion:** As the preteen reaches the teenage years, many changes happen not only in the life of the teen but in the relationships between teen and parent and teen and

grandparent. Significant relationships during these years are more peer oriented and grandparents just need to accept the fact that the grandkids prefer the company of other kids. At this age the teen, according to Erikson is searching for identity: who am I...who can I be? Also during this time the teen's cognitive development becomes more mature as a formal operational stage of thinking logically although ideology takes shape.

Morally the teen passes through two stages of Kohlberg's development but usually stays longer at stage three. Wanting to be a good person flows in wanting to do the right things to get the right feeling about self, others and society. Faith wise, most teens are still in Fowler's stage three where the church is the religious institution that the teen looks to for a model of godly behavior.

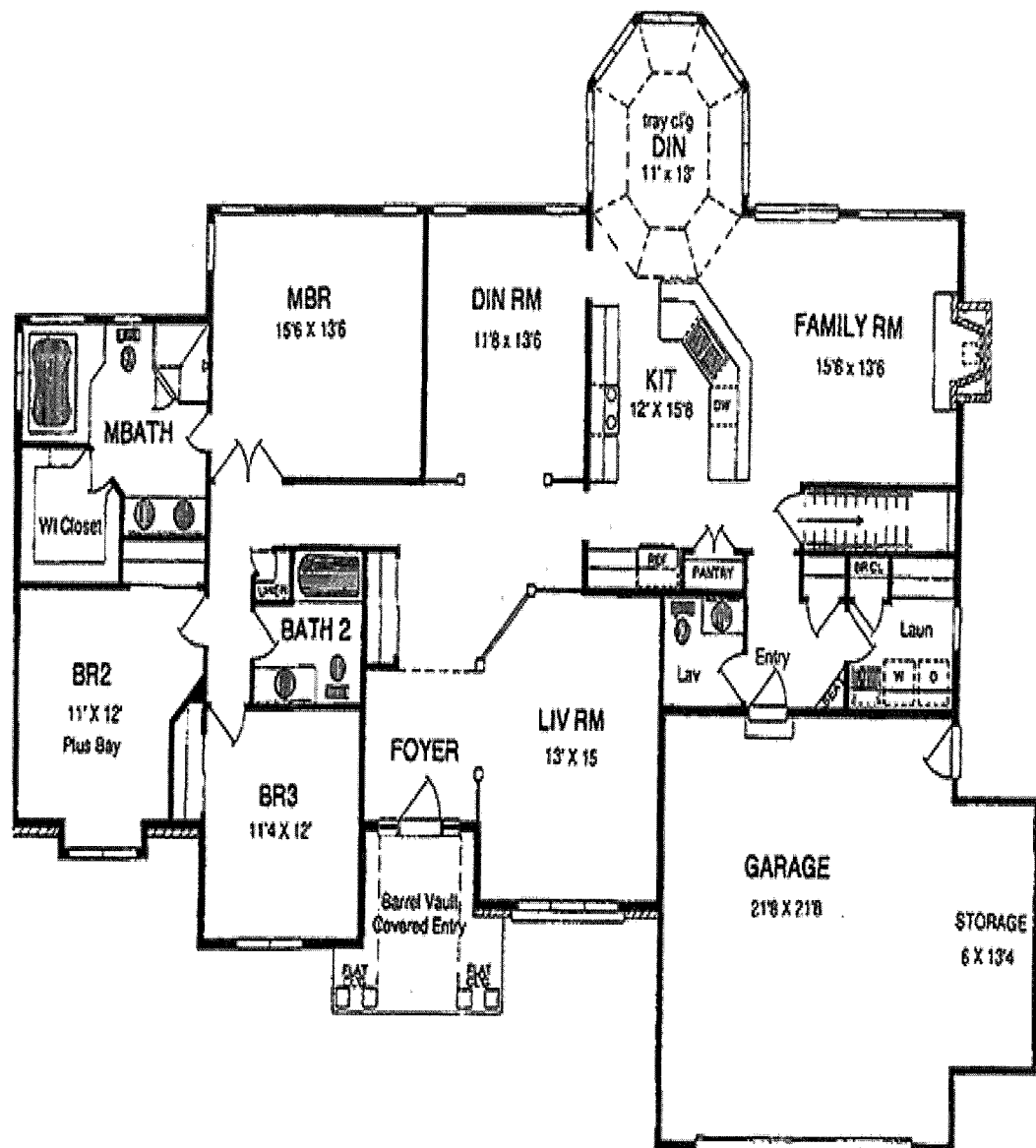


Figure 6. The Legacy Home: Grand-Teens

**Initial Legacy Questions:** (X) the rooms where grandchild(ren) will be spend most time.  
Place (X) where grandchild(ren) will be sleeping.

**Main Legacy Décor:** When considering where the teen will spend their time, there should be a realization that the teen is not a child in many ways anymore. As well, most teens become somewhat of an idealist and the sense of right and wrong can be a very strong innate psychological drive. For the teen, a picture of the 10 Commandments, Jesus driving out the money exchangers in the temple, Jesus praying alone, and the Red Sea being divided, can play into this growing sense that the world can be a cruel and unjust place and needs to experience change. In many ways teens can be social creatures during these years but the inward life is indeed a constant struggle. Grands

home should exude a loving atmosphere and yet show that there is a basic affinity within the realm of the Christian faith that their grandparents have. Was Jesus a rebel? It's hard for grandparents to agree, that yes, He was and still is. But a rebel with a greater purpose in mind. The conversation can now move from, Jesus loves you, to Jesus died for you. Teens, I believe get it.

**Supplementary Gospel Tools:** Age- Appropriate (13-19) Christian Books (Appendix H), magazines, tracts, rooms with CD and DVD players, some Christian music but not a lot, picture albums of old family pictures, and board games.

**Primary Gospel Tool:** The Four Spiritual Laws (Appendix E) The Laws play into the idealism and the need for some concreteness in the ever-changing life of the teen. "This is the way, these are the steps, this is what you get, and this is what you can expect are the key step-by-step issues described in this presentation of the Gospel that just makes sense to the one seeking a directions in finding direction.

**Primary tool sharing exercise.**

### Early Adulthood (Ages: 20-39)

**Snapshot: "Grand-Man/Woman"**

**Psychosocial:**

Approximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
20–39 years	Love	Intimacy vs. isolation	Friends, partners	Can I love?	Romantic relationships

**Cognitive:**

Stage of Development	Key Feature	Research Study
Formal Operational 11yrs +	Manipulate ideas in head, e.g. Abstract Reasoning	Pendulum Task

**Moral:**

<b>Conventional Level</b>	
4. How moral an action is depends on how well it conforms to society's rules; the emphasis at this level is on maintaining social order.	Example: I am personally against the war, but would never publicly protest it on campus without the administration's permission.
<b>Post-Conventional Level</b>	
5. Moral behavior at this level might include arguing in favor of customs or laws being changed in order to preserve the health of the society; blind obedience is more forcefully questioned and cultural differences in what is considered to be ethical behavior are recognized.	Example: It can't be right that huge corporations sometimes pay no taxes; that law needs to be changed, so that the burden of taxes falls more equally on everyone's shoulders.

**Faith:**

<b>Level</b>	<b>~Ages</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
Stage 4	early adult	Individuative-reflective	The sense of identity and outlook on the world are differentiated and the person develops explicit systems of meaning.

**Discussion:** The young adult is on the quest to find love. Can I love, is the existential concern. Intimacy verses isolation is how Erikson describes this developmental period. This may be the time when marriage, career, starting a family, family life, can be the main emphasis in the life. These can be pretty lean times for grand-man/woman visits. Thus, the need is simply to be the same, strongly perceived, consistent believer in Christ that the grand has observed for many years. Cognitively, young adults are operating better in the formal operational stage than when they began in their teens. Morally, the adult-man/woman becomes more socio-centric rather than egocentric in their thinking and moral decisions are then made from that particular viewpoint. There also is a growing sense of reality as the young adult departs from much of his or her early idealism. Faith can and should be developing and deeper. Or it may be temporally stagnant. The call however for grandparents to be the loving Christian grandparents has never been as important as now, during these ages.



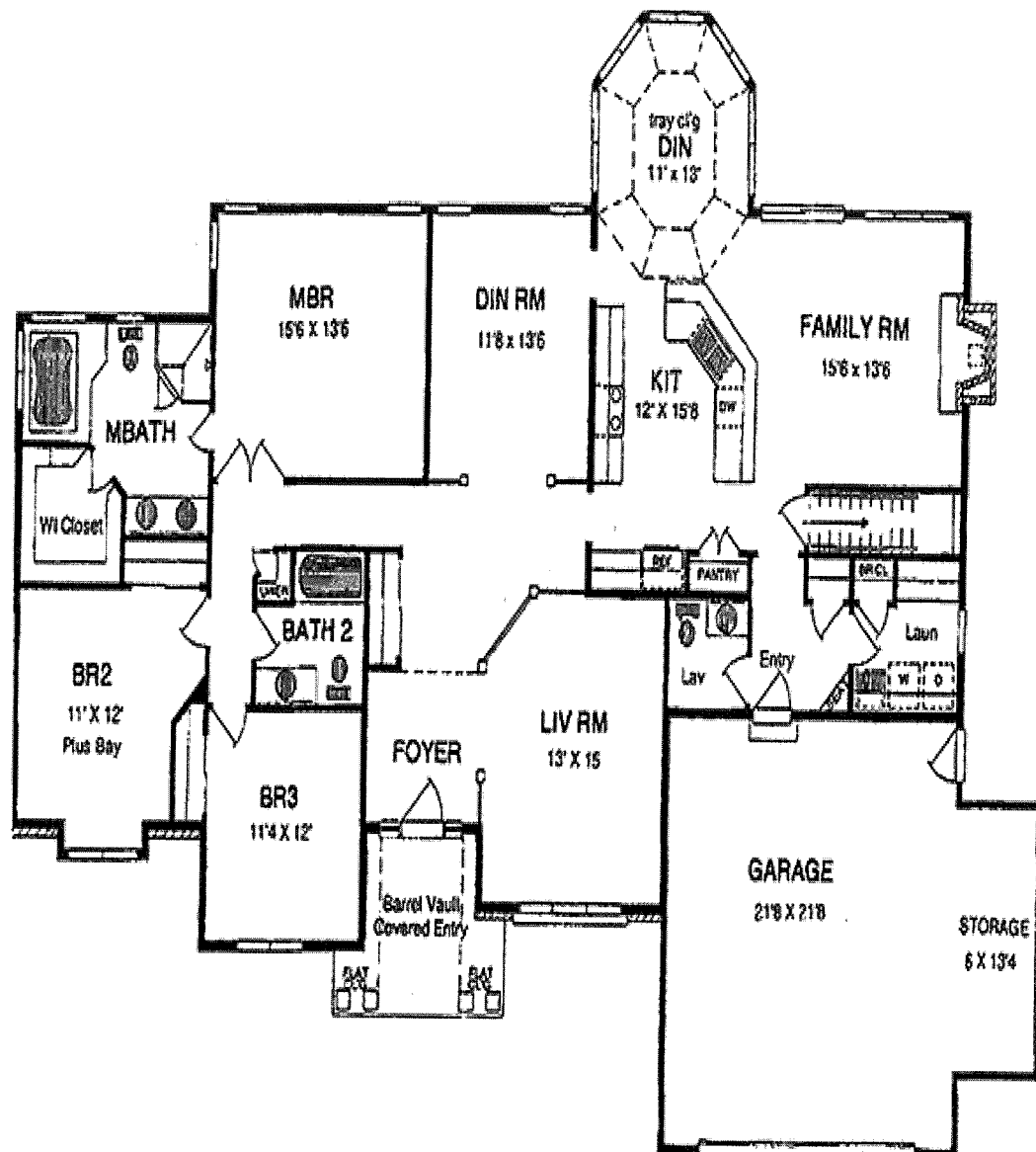


Figure 7. The Legacy Home: Grand-Man/Woman

**Initial Legacy Questions:** (X) the rooms where grandchild(ren) will be spend most time. Place (X) where grandchild(ren) will be sleeping.

**Main Legacy Décor:** In the early adult years college and career may be the main stays in the life of the beloved Grandchild. Marriage can and more often than not gets put off until the early 30's. By then the adult grandchild realizes that she is a part of the human race with responsibilities, obligations, bills to pay, careers to keep on track, kids to raise and so on. The picture of Christ that was present when they were a baby may be much appreciated now along with some of the more "family" oriented" pictures of Christ: Jesus teaching in the temple, Jesus, a man bearing a cross, Jesus suffering for others, Jesus lovingly embracing his mother, now can touch the sympathetic heart as well as the

psyche of the young adult. The extra bedroom, living room, kitchen all are most utilized during this time. However, if a great grandchild is born, then the cycle begins again as far as décor goes.

**Supplementary Gospel Tools:** Age appropriate Books that can be given to take with a grandchild, Magazines, Sermons on CD. Movies that have family values and a Christian emphasis.

**Primary Gospel Tools:** Romans Road (Appendix F) and A Bible Plan of Salvation (Appendix G)

The Primary Gospel tool for young adults is actually two sides of the same coin. They both take the grand-adult through the pages of the grandparent's bible. By now, there usually is the perception that grandparents are "religious" or better yet, "holy." Thus, using the "holy" book adds credence to the conversation concerning the issues of faith. The *Romans Road* could just be memorized and presented to the grandchild. Simply handing them a tract is of little value. The simple bible plan of salvation, however, calls for the grand to have at least a cursory knowledge of scriptures to be able to keep one's train of thought going while moving from John 3:16 to Revelation 3:20, and all the scriptures from Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Ephesians, in between. The goal of both however, is for the young adult to find the love that they have been looking for and to find the one true and faithful "One" who chooses to be their personal life mate and friend.

**Primary tool sharing exercise.**

## LEGACY COVENANT

I/ We grandparents according to the providence and grace of our God, do hereby covenant with the heavenly Father, His Son Jesus, and the Blessed Holy Spirit, to present to the grandchildren listed below, the Truth of the Gospel message according to the resources included in this handbook, at each age-level as possible, as given the aid and opportunity by the God of Salvation. We do so in order that we may be a part of the Spiritual Legacy that we have borne witness to with our lives and our words, that the above mentioned grandchildren will heed the example set before them and follow in our footsteps as they journey in this life and to the next life in heaven through Jesus Christ.

X \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_.

X \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_.

Name	YOU	WB	GGNIC	BI	4SL	RR	BPOS

# Exit Survey

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ # of Grandchildren \_\_\_\_\_ Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

Key=Strongly Disagree    Disagree    Neutral    Agree    Strongly Agree

1. I feel adequately prepared to talk about the Gospel with my grandchildren.  
SD    D    N    A    SA
2. I am familiar with the following Gospel plans: (Please circle all that apply)  
Wordless Book    Romans Road    The Bridge illustration  
God's Good News in Color    Four Spiritual Laws    Bible Plan of Salvation  
And MY favorite \_\_\_\_\_ (Only One)
3. As long as my grandchildren have religion...  
SD    D    N    A    SA
4. Pictures of Jesus on the cross are just too violent for me to have on my walls.  
SD    D    N    A    SA
5. Jesus is the only way that my grandchild has to get to heaven.  
SD    D    N    A    SA
6. Infants and toddlers are too young to be influenced spiritually.  
SD    D    N    A    SA
7. Kids 6-12 don't need to know the **entire** Gospel message.  
SA    D    N    A    SA
8. Adult grandchildren no longer need me to talk to them about Jesus Christ.  
SD    D    N    A    SA
9. Parents should always be asked if grandparents want to talk about spiritual/religious topics with grandchildren.  
SD    D    N    A    SA
10. Grand-teens aren't that interested in "Religious Subjects."  
SD    D    N    A    SA
11. The age at which I should stop insisting that my Grandchildren come to church with me. (Please circle one)  
(Never Insist) (0-2) (2-4) (3-5) (5-12) (12-19) (20-35) (Never Stop)

12. Religious Pictures, Symbols, Objects should be numerous, prominent, and noticeable in my home.

SD      D      N      A      SA

13. Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven.

SD      D      N      A      SA

14. I can begin to influence my grandchild for Christ at the age of: (Please circle one)  
(Not My place) (0-2) (2-4) (3-5) (5-12) (12-19) (20-35) (Every age)

15. It is important for me to share my faith in Christ with my Grandchildren.

SD      D      N      A      SA

16. Grandparents should influence their grandchildren in the area of faith.

SD      D      N      A      SA

17. Parents are better equipped to answer their children's questions regarding faith.

SD      D      N      A      SA

18. "Word" of God or "word" of God. (Please circle one)

19. The order of importance in teaching children about Spiritual matters. (list 1-5)

Pastor \_\_\_\_ Parents \_\_\_\_ Siblings \_\_\_\_ SS Teachers \_\_\_\_ Grandparents \_\_\_\_

20. I know and understand the Plan of Salvation as described in the Bible.

SD      D      N      A      SA

## CHAPTER FIVE

### OUTCOMES

#### **Introduction**

The final chapter in this thesis-project evaluates the effectiveness in attempting to answer the thesis question put forth in chapter one: “How can grandparents influence their grandchildren with the Gospel message in an age-appropriate manner?” As much as that question will try to be answered, the overall question isn’t so much “can” grandparents’ attempt, but rather, “will” grandparents try. My overall goal is to provide a resource that can be utilized by the legacy-minded evangelical grandparent. However, it is God who will have to provide the heart-desire and willful-determination. My greatest hope is that He will. This last chapter will explore the following features: the Handbook, the Focus group, the Seminar, the Thesis- hypothesis evaluation, Perceived strengths and weaknesses of the project, and some Comments and Conclusion.

#### **The Handbook**

The handbook could have consisted of nothing more than the elements included in chapter four of the thesis-project. However, the context for grandparental influence discussed in chapter one, the biblical mandate in chapter two, and grandchild development in chapter three were too foundational to exclude. Also, the project’s appendix and bibliography were included in the handbook. The end project was a 166

page, bound tome. The seminar focus group expressed relief and appreciation when it was divulged that the material for the seminar only consisted of chapter four.

However, this does bring out a valid point: if grandparents are going to be sold on the idea of “how” to share their faith with their grandkids, they must first explore the deeper question of the deceptively ominous “why?” “Sure, Christ tells us to share our faith, but these are my grandkids...” Is there really a need? Shouldn’t it really be up to the parents, or the church? Will my grandkids even be interested in what I have to say about spiritual things? Is it my place? Hopefully, after a closer consideration of the foundational materials, the grandparent will be struck with the conviction that they not only “can,” but “must” share the Gospel with his grandchildren. Every grandparent should sincerely consider, “If not me, then who? Am I really going to be willing to trust my grandchild’s eternal destiny totally to others?” Jesus’ admonition to every converted grandparent might be-- live it and leave it!

### **The Focus Group**

The focus group that took part in the seminar consisted of twelve individuals, including four couples, two widows, and two women. Six were employed, and six were retired. Ten could be classified as white collar workers, and two were blue collar personnel. A smaller, yet interested, assembly of like-minded folks allowed for good group dynamics, open and lively discussion, and times of participation with each other. The group consisted of people who had not been a part of an earlier unlimited focus group that had been introduced to this material as part of sermon project in the

Pastoral Skills DMin track. The group represented a total of thirty grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

### **The Seminar**

The seminar was entitled, “Grand Legacy: How to Share your Faith in Christ with Your Grandchildren in an Age-Appropriated Manner.” The seminar took place on a Friday evening, Saturday morning, and early Saturday afternoon. Each participant was provided with: a handbook, an Entering Survey, and an Exiting Survey. They also received a 6 ½” X 8 1/2” plastic folding envelope that contained:

- 3” round mirror
- 2” X 3” Wordless Book with “How to lead a Child to Christ” pamphlet
- “God’s Good News in Color” tract
- “Bridge to Life” tract
- “The Four Spiritual Laws” tract
- “The Roman’s Road’ tract
- 5 ½’ X 8 ½ “Biblical Plan of Salvation” printed on cardstock.<sup>1</sup>

The participants completed the entering survey on Friday, and then they were introduced to the material in the Legacy handbook. The first talk of the evening discussed the general and spiritual influences of grandparents upon their grandchildren. The second segment was a lecture with questions and answers about the four

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix J



grandchild measuring tools: Erickson's Psychosocial, Piaget's Cognitive, Kohlberg's Moral, and Fowler's Faith.

The last segment of the opening evening discussed the Legacy home. Following a short presentation concerning symbols and objects, follow-up observations argued that grandparent's homes can, should, and do silently speak of the grandparent's faith in Christ. A series of nine pictures displayed on a group of chairs provided the group an opportunity to discern which pictures in which rooms might be appropriately displayed at differing ages of their grandchildren. The nine pictures included: "The Invitation," "The Road to Emmaus," "John 14:16," "God is Good," "A large Picture of Christ," "Christ knocking at the Hearts Door," "A Cross," "The Ten Commandments," and an "Eight Year Old's Picture of God and the Family." Then, the evening ended after explaining the procedure of locating the most prominent place which the grandchild would spend their time at each age level.

The process for the morning session followed a preset pattern of giving a "snapshot" view of age group's growing psychosocial, cognitive, moral, and faith development, with discussion of how a child matures and grows in his ability to comprehend various concepts. This was followed by a brief time spent on the legacy home: discerning where the grandchild would spend the most time and what pictures, plaques, posters, and objects might be useful and effective in the particular rooms. This was followed by a list of ideas about supplemental books, toys, and games that might be age appropriate.

However, the main emphasis, and most of the allotted time, was spent on the primary Gospel tools: “Mirror” for Grand-infants, “Wordless Book” for Grand-Toddlers, “God’s Good News in Colors” for Grand-Preschoolers, “Bridge to Life” for Grand-Kids, “Four Spiritual laws” for Grand-Teens, and the “Romans Road” and the “Biblical Plan of Salvation” for Grand Man/Woman. The mirror, tracts, and pamphlets were taken out of the presentation envelope as each age group was discussed. The presenter explained the tool and used role-play to show how the tool might be used. This was an enjoyable experience, and eye-opening to all. The bulk of each session’s time limit was spent on the participants attempting to share the Gospel tool with one another with the information that they had just learned. This proved to be the most beneficial part of the seminar. The overwhelming comment voiced was, “It’s a lot harder to do than it looks on the surface—but it’s worth it.” The seminar concluded with the signing of the Legacy Covenant and the Exit Survey.

All in all, I was pleased with the seminar’s flow and feel. The participants each expressed appreciation and fascination with the concept of the thesis-project. What had been the object of three years of consideration, study, and planning finally had been presented in a way that I felt was well-organized and thought through, as well as useful and thought provoking for those who participated in the seminar.

### **Thesis-Project Hypothesis Evaluation**

The thesis-project question, “How can grandparents influence their grandchildren with the Gospel message in an age-appropriate manner?” is based on the

hypothesis that, given the right understanding and tools, most evangelical-minded grandparents desire ways to share their faith in Christ with their precious grandchildren. The issue of “how” has been the focus of this project. Did the thesis-project provide the right tools necessary for grandparents to use? Did the results of the focus group’s entering and exiting surveys indicate a change of perception about talking to grandkids about Christ when given adequate tools? Did the seminar produce an encouragement to share one’s faith? Did what was presented in the seminar make enough sense, and seem logical and doable? To try to answer these questions, we consider 3 surveys: The Congregational Survey, The Entering Survey and the Exiting Survey.

### The Congregational Survey

The Congregational Survey<sup>2</sup> was part of the project phase in the first year of the DMin track. The congregation was one that I had just started ministering in as the Teaching Elder (Pastor). Nearly 85 percent of the congregation’s members were grandparents. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregation consisted of about 80 members. After ministering in the PC (USA) for thirteen years, I had come to realize the denomination’s lack of emphasis on biblical authority, the Lordship of Christ, the sanctity of all life, and the absence of personal evangelism. Still, I was hopeful the idea of the thesis-project had taken root.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix J.

This survey measured the participant's (grandparents) overall understanding of influence, symbols and objects, knowledge of the primary Gospel tools, and openness to sharing their faith in Christ with their grandchildren. Some of the more surprising, though expected, results, are as follows:

- 100% claimed to be Christians; the average years that the participants had been Christian was 53
- 67% were told about Christ by their parents
- 6% were told about Christ by their grandparents
- 60% believed it was up to the grandchild to make up their own mind about religion
- 97% observed religious objects in both their parents and grandparent's homes
- 67% went to church regularly as children.

Furthermore, on a scale of 1-10, 1 being not very and 10 being extremely, the following average score were given:

- The Bible is important to your own faith journey (7.5)
- Parents should share their faith with the children (9)
- Sharing ones faith with your children (7)
- Importance for grandparents sharing their faith with grandkids (8)
- Comfortable sharing their faith with grandchildren (7.5)

About 18 percent had heard of the "Four Spiritual laws." Approximately 78 percent believed that Bible teaching is missing in kids' lives today. Shockingly, 36

percent believed that Jesus is one way to heaven, but other religions offer the same hope. Not surprisingly, 93 percent said that grandchildren trust grandparents. Perhaps, the most telling number was that a tepid 51 percent said they would share their faith with their grandchildren if they had a resource tool that would help them know how and what to share. Considering this last statistic, 34 percent did not respond, whereas 15 percent stated a flat, no.

Upon first consideration of the survey results, thoughts of abandoning the idea of this thesis-project were entertained. The results, though not as low as one would assume for a liberal denomination, still were not high enough to assume a worthwhile response in light of all of the study and work involved in developing the thesis-project handbook. However, two factors kept the idea alive. The first factor was the influence of my own grandparents in my own life. The second factor was the time spent in the south as part of various Southern Baptist churches.

With an undergraduate degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, I can picture the handbook being extremely relevant and useful for not only Baptists, but every denomination that seriously considers the call of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission. After all, if 50 percent of Presbyterians would share their faith if they had a tool to do so, perhaps 75 percent of Southern Baptists might do the same. In the end, if one grandparent could tap into the resources this handbook provides, then all the time and effort have been more than worth it.

### The Focus Group's Entering Survey

There is the consideration that the participants in this seminar were interested in leaving a Grand-Legacy, and in considering what would be covered and learned to do so. These folks, although they were friends and congregants, had a least an inkling of desire to pass their faith in Christ to their own grandchildren.

The survey had 20 questions, with 5 questions each concerning Theology, Influence, Evangelism, and General Background. 15 questions utilized a Likert 5-point scale (SD, D, N, A, SA). One question asked to order preferences from 1-5. Four questions asked participants to circle to their answer. The Entering Survey questions and results are as follows:

#### **Theology: (Questions: 3, 9, 13, 16, 20)**

3. "Word" of God or "word" of God. **100% "Word"**

9. Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven. **100% SA or A**

13. Kids 6-12 don't need to know the **entire** Gospel message. **58% SD 33% D 8% A**

16. I feel adequately prepared to talk about the Gospel with my grandchildren. **58% SA 16% A 25% D 8% N**

20. Jesus is the only way that my grandchild has to get to heaven. **66% SA 25% A 6% D**

#### **Influence: (Questions: 1, 8, 10, 12, 19)**

1. Grandparents should influence their grandchildren in the area of faith. **91% SA 8% A**

8. Religious Pictures, Symbols, Objects should be numerous, prominent, and noticeable in my home. **50% SA 33% A 8% N 8% D**

10. I can begin to influence my grandchild for Christ at the age of: **66% Every Age 34% (0-2)**

12. Infants and toddlers are too young to be influenced spiritually. **75% SD 25% N or D**

19. Pictures of Jesus on the cross are just too violent for me to have on my walls. **75% SD 25% D**

**Evangelism: (Questions: 7, 11, 14, 17, 18)**

7. The age at which I should stop insisting that my Grandchildren come to church with me. **58% Never Stop 33% Never Insist 8% (12-19)**

11. It is important for me to share my faith in Christ with my Grandchildren. **75% SA 25% A**

14. Adult grandchildren no longer need me to talk to them about Jesus Christ. **75% SD 25% A**

17. I am familiar with the following Gospel plans: (Please circle all that apply)  
Wordless Book                      Romans Road                      The Bridge illustration  
God's Good News in Color      Four Spiritual Laws      Bible Plan of Salvation  
**8%- 0   58%- 1   8%-2   8%-3   16%-5   8%=6**

18. As long as my grandchildren have religion... **8% SA 16% A 41% D 33% SD**

**General Background: (Questions: 2, 4, 5, 6, 15)**

2. Parents are better equipped to answer their children's questions regarding faith. **91% D or N 8% A**

4. The order of importance in teaching children about Spiritual matters. (List 1-5)  
Pastor \_\_\_\_ Parents \_\_\_\_ Siblings \_\_\_\_ SS Teachers \_\_\_\_ Grandparents \_\_\_\_  
**91%: 1 Parent 2 Grandparent 8%: 1 Parent 2 Siblings 3 Grandparents**

5. I know and understand the Plan of Salvation as described in the Bible. **66% SA 34% A**

6. Grand-teens aren't that interested in "Religious Subjects." **8% SD 58% D 16% A 16% N**

15. Parents should always be asked if grandparents want to talk about spiritual/religious topics with grandchildren. **58% A 33% D 16% N**

As noted in chapter four: "The surveys will be numbered and the exit survey will consist of the same questions in a different order. The goal is to see if the material presented in the seminar actually influenced the grandparents view point in any of the above mentioned areas. The hypothesis is that there will be slight changes in Background and Theology, and considerable changes in Influence and Evangelism."

#### The Focus Group's Exiting Survey

The exiting survey results are posted next to the Entering Survey Results in **Blue** with slight changes left **Blue** and significant changes in **red**.

#### Theology: (Questions: 3, 9, 13, 16, 20)

3. "Word" of God or "word" of God.  
(100% "Word") **100% "Word"**

9. Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven.  
(100% SA or A) **100% SA or A**

13. Kids 6-12 don't need to know the **entire** Gospel message.  
(58% SD 33% D 8% A) **58% SD 16% D 16% A 8% N**

16. I feel adequately prepared to talk about the Gospel with my grandchildren.  
(58% SA 16% A 25% D 8% N) **41% SA 58%A**

20. Jesus is the only way that my grandchild has to get to heaven.  
(66% SA 25% A 6% D) **100% SA**



**Influence: (Questions: 1, 8, 10, 12, 19)**

1. Grandparents should influence their grandchildren in the area of faith.

**(91% SA 8% A)**

**91% SA 8% A**

8. Religious Pictures, Symbols, Objects should be numerous, prominent, and noticeable in my home.

**(50% SA 33% A 8% N 8% D)**

**58% SA 41% A 8%N**

10. I can begin to influence my grandchild for Christ at the age of:

**(66% Every Age 34% (0-2)**

**41% Every Age 58% (0-2)**

12. Infants and toddlers are too young to be influenced spiritually

**(75% SD 25% N or D)**

**83% SD 16% D**

19. Pictures of Jesus on the cross are just too violent for me to have on my walls

**(75% SD 25% D)**

**50% SD 50% D**

**Evangelism: (Questions: 7, 11, 14, 17, 18)**

7. The age at which I should stop insisting that my Grandchildren come to church with me.

**58% Never Stop 33% Never Insist 8% (12-19)**

**66% Never Stop 25% Never Insist 8% (12-19)**

11. It is important for me to share my faith in Christ with my Grandchildren

**(75% SA 25% A)**

**83% SA 16% A**

14. Adult grandchildren no longer need me to talk to them about Jesus Christ.

**(75% SD 25% A)**

**83% SD 16%A**

17. I am familiar with the following Gospel plans: (Please circle all that apply)

Wordless Book

Romans Road

The Bridge illustration

God's Good News in Color

Four Spiritual Laws

Bible Plan of Salvation

**(8%- 0 58%- 1 8%-2 8%-3 16%-5 8%=6) 100%-6**

18. As long as my grandchildren have religion...

**(8% SA 16% A 41% D 33% SD)**

**33% SA 8% N 58% SD**

**General Background: (Questions: 2, 4, 5, 6, 15)**

2. Parents are better equipped to answer their children's questions regarding faith.

**(91% D or N 8% A)**

**50%SD 26% D 16% N 8% A**

4. The order of importance in teaching children about Spiritual matters. (List 1-5) Pastor  
\_\_\_\_ Parents \_\_\_\_ Siblings \_\_\_\_ SS Teachers \_\_\_\_ Grandparents \_\_\_\_

**(91%: 1 Parent 2 Grandparent 8%: 1 Parent 2 Siblings)**

**66%: 1 Parent 2 Grandparent 25%: 1 Grandparent 2 Parent 8% 1 Parent 2 Sibling**

5. I know and understand the Plan of Salvation as described in the Bible.

**(66% SA 34% A)**

**83% SA 16% A**

6. Grand-teens aren't that interested in "Religious Subjects."

**(8% SD 58%D 16% A 16% N)**

**50% SD 25% D 8% N 16% A**

15. Parents should always be asked if grandparents want to talk about spiritual/religious topics with grandchildren.

**(58% A 33% D 16% N)**

**8% SA 25% A 41%N 16% D 8% SD**

**Evaluating the Results**

As noted, the focus group was already an evangelical-hearted and legacy-minded assembly. Thus, a swing of 8-16 percent represents a true change in the thinking of at least 1 or 2 people, which is significant in this context. My hypothesis that only two areas (Influence and Evangelism) would see "considerable" change was only half correct. In actuality, every category had considerable change in at least three of the five questions, with Evangelism seeing four.

In the Theology section, two questions saw positive results. To the question "I feel adequately prepared to talk about the Gospel with my grandchildren," 100 percent of the participants now strongly agreed or agreed that they felt prepared to share the

gospel, negating the 33 percent who originally were neutral or disagreed. To the question, "Jesus is the only way that my grandchild has to get to heaven," 100 percent of the group now strongly agreed with the premise. Thankfully, this includes the one who had disagreed, and the 25 percent who had only agreed. Taken together, it appears the handbook presented in the seminar bolstered not only the grandparents confidence about sharing their faith, but it also seemed to make the essential theological point that Christ is the only way to heaven more concrete.

The Influence section also saw promising changes. To the question, "Religious Pictures, Symbols, Objects should be numerous, prominent, and noticeable in my home," 91 percent of the participants now strongly agreed or agreed with the premise. The move up from 50 percent to 58 percent in strongly agree and from 33 percent to 41 percent to agree is significant and encouraging. To the question, "I can begin to influence my grandchild for Christ at the age of," the marked change from 34 percent to 58 percent from the generic "any age" to the more specific (0-2 years old) signifies the idea that influence can and does begin in infancy, as presented in the seminar. The shifts seen in the question of, "Infants and toddlers are too young to be influenced spiritually," solidified the results of the last question. The handbook's assertion that the grandparents' home does indeed speak of faith seems to hold some water, as does the idea that the age to begin to spiritually influence grandkids is sooner than one might think.

The Evangelism section had very promising results. The first question, "The age at which I should stop insisting that my Grandchildren come to church with me," saw at

least one individual (8 percent) change their answer from, “never insist,” to the more positive, “never stop.” It may be a small observation, but significant in every way. The same slight shift is seen in the two questions, “It is important for me to share my faith in Christ with my Grandchildren—75 percent to 83 percent SA,” and “Adult grandchildren no longer need me to talk to them about Jesus Christ-75 percent to 83 percent SD.”

The final question worth noting in the evangelism section is a mixed bag. The question, “As long as my grandchildren have religion...,” may have been misinterpreted. The original thought was, are grandparents happy with their grandchildren pursuing any religious activity in any religion. My assumption was that the answer would be, no—only Christ is the way and only Christianity should be acceptable. Others may have been denominationally-minded or Catholicism conscious. Surprisingly, the strongly agree rocked from 8 percent to 33 percent--discouraging. However, the strongly disagree also increased from 33 percent to 58 percent--encouraging. Oh well, that’s what happens when one assumes.

All in all, the results do show an openness to, and interest in, being evangelistically minded when it comes to grandchildren. The material in the handbook does seem to serve the purpose of bringing the subject up of sharing Christ—which provides fodder for the argument of answering positively when considering the thesis question.

The last section concerning General background, had a few surprises. The first concerned the question, “The order of importance in teaching children about Spiritual matters. (List 1-5) Pastor \_\_\_\_ Parents \_\_\_\_ Siblings \_\_\_\_ SS Teachers \_\_\_\_

Grandparents\_\_\_\_.” The entering survey showed an almost exclusive order (91 percent) of 1 Parent 2 Grandparent. The exiting survey now shows only a 66 percent preference with the original order with the new view, 1 Grandparent 2 Parent, increase from 0 percent to 25 percent. I do not know if this is good or bad. Yet, it may show that a few grandparents may know that, left solely to their children to share their faith in Christ, it might never happen. Thus, they may feel now it is up to them. This is a positive twist in one respect, but a sad circumstance, in general.

To the question, “I know and understand the Plan of Salvation as described in the Bible,” there was an increase in strongly agree from 66 percent to 83 percent. To the final question, “Parents should always be asked if grandparents want to talk about spiritual/religious topics with grandchildren,” the biggest increase in the mixed bag of opinions was the neutral response’s rise from 16 percent to 41 percent. There does seem to be some ambiguity in reaching an agreement to strongly agree or strongly disagree. At least the participants are hopefully considering their rightful spiritual role in the family.

With all that said, there does seem to be some empirical validity in assuming that grandparents “can” positively influence their grandchildren with the gospel. In light of the seminar structure of traversing through each age group, there does seem to be efficacy in doing so in an age appropriated manner. The further questions of, did the thesis-project provide the right Gospel tools necessary for grandparents to use? Did the results of the focus group’s entering and exiting surveys indicate a change of perception

about talking to grandkids about Christ when given various tools? Were the perceptions an encouragement to share one's faith or become more of a hindrance?

### **Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of the Project**

Before we tackle the questions mentioned above, the most glaring weakness of the thesis-project needs to be mentioned: many conclusions are drawn from a very small focus group. Could these results be typical and representative of a much larger audience? Perhaps. Although the focus group was fixated on their collective intent for being in the group, it provided a wide spectrum of answers on the entering and exiting surveys that could be representative of a much larger group. With that weakness brought to light, we move to the questions.

We will start with the last question and move backwards. "Did what was presented in the seminar make enough sense and seem logical and doable?" Here the issue arises concerning the "snapshots" of each age group. The contention was that, given a brief look at psychosocial existential question, the cognitive, moral, and faith development at each age would not only give the participants some idea of the grandchild's changing growth and abilities of cognition and perception, but also would be the elements that laid the foundation for the seven gospel tools (mirror, Wordless book, God's Good News in Color, the Bride Illustration, the Four Spiritual laws, the Romans Road and a biblical plan of salvation.)

The use of Erikson, Piaget, Kohlberg, and Fowler did provide enough information to at least show *a* change going on the life of the child.<sup>3</sup> Did the phases and levels match up concretely with the ages? I presume they were somewhat close. However, not being an expert in the field of psychology, it certainly left a lot to educated assumption and theoretical conjecturing. There did seem to be more than a few “grey” areas when trying to match levels with ages, and ages with stages. The seminar participants were at the mercy of my ignorance. I can only put forth that, given a thorough review by experts in the related fields, my assumptions and guesses were not too far off base. With that weakness noted, the participants did seem to understand the sequence of development, and they were not too overwhelmed by the unfamiliarity of the topic. There did seem to be an understanding that this was only a “snapshot,” and not a full psychological evaluation.

The real question is, did the Gospel tools fully align with where the child may be in his or her development? They certainly give the impression to be the case. However, I was left to consider, am I using specific empirical knowledge, or am I simply making each tool fit into a certain preconceived, though logical, order? To me, the answer is not one or the other, but both. Judging from the response of the seminar participants, the tools did “fit” well with each age group. At least with this focus group, there was much interest, positive comments, appreciation and encouragement to make this

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix L

material available to the wider church family. To that regard, I do believe the materials presented in the seminar made sense, and was logical and doable.

The next question to consider is, did the seminar produce an encouragement to share one's faith? The proverbial leading a horse to water statement comes in here. As was noted at the beginning of this chapter, it is not so much, "can" a grandparent influence their grandchildren with the gospel message as it is, "will" they even try. The seminar structure allowed a goodly amount of time to both see a gospel presentation of each tool and to practice the presentation with one another. At least they saw it could be done and they had a flavor of how to do it.

The comment, "It's a lot harder to do than it looks," although good in the sense that one needs to practice with each tool, it is also a borderline hindrance as to one's perception of competence to do so. The covenant agreement that each participant was asked to sign, covenanting with God to share, was meant to spur the grandparent to put aside their fears and to draw confidence from the One who will give them the words and the boldness to attempt the deed. The answer to the question, "Were the perceptions an encouragement to share one's faith or become more of a hindrance" is yes. Yes, in regards to being both an encouragement and a hindrance. However, the choice is now in the hands of the participant. When the choice travels upward from the hands to the heart, the "encouragement to" will win.

"Did the results of the focus group's entering and exiting surveys indicate a change of perception about talking to grandkids about Christ when given the various tools to work with? In other words, did the seminar's covering of the handbook actually



accomplish what it was meant to in the lives of the participants? Given the reality that as a pastor who knows that most people cannot even tell you what a sermon's title was from the previous week, much less the spiritual points and challenges, I am left to leave the results, if any, solely in the hands of God. My obligation in preaching or presentation is fulfilled in the knowledge that I have been faithful to share. My sincerest and earnest prayer is that the Lord will bring to remembrance all that he may have seeded in the hearts of His people. From a pragmatic view, the strength of the handbook lies in the reality that it is well organized and thoughtfully presented; not so "heady" to discourage, but understandable enough to be useful, and even fun.

Finally, did the thesis-project provide the right Gospel tools necessary for the grandparents to use? To be quite honest, all of the gospel tools tell one story. The tools themselves are just different ways of telling the same story, over and over. The Gospel itself is good news enough; the tools are called tools because that is how they function. The tools only help to explain the faith of the grandparent. How, and if, the message is received lies more in the example lived out before the grandchild than in the stumbling or articulate words of the loving grandparent. Being a grandparent is a great privilege. Being a grandparent of faith is to be more; a purpose-filled partnership with the King of Hearts and Lord of Love. It is not just a privilege, it is life, in and of itself.

### **Comments and Conclusion**

The entire process, from examining the general and spiritual influence of grandparents in chapter one to considering the biblical model and mandate in chapter

two, to proving a closer look at grandchildren's overall growth in chapter three, to the project design in chapter four , and finally the outcomes and conclusions in chapter five, was an intriguing exercise. The sheer time demanded to keep moving forward in the D.Min. process made the work not so much a burden as an opportunity.

Was the thesis question answered? In a way, yes. It provided *one* way that grandparents can share their faith in Christ with their grandchildren in an age appropriate manner. In a way, no. This project only showed how to share the message of the gospel with grandchildren—nothing more, really. So much more work could be done on how to live, what to say, how to walk the walk, and not just talk the talk. This thesis-project is only a small, though admittedly important, part of the overall “pie” of Christian grandparental influence and lifestyle.

In addition, it should be acknowledged that in no way did the work presented here “reinvent the wheel.” All of the hard work of research concerning both grandparents and grandchildren, from designing various gospel tracts and materials to psychological studies, to the very pictures and other resources that could be utilized in the grandparent's homes, was simply there for the taking. The most that can be said, is that maybe a few of the wheel's spokes were rearranged.

As well, when considering the specific topic of, “Grand-Legacy: How can Grandparents influence...” is strictly context-orientated. Given a different context, much of the same material could be done under the guise of say, “Legacy: How can Parents influence....” One of the seminar participants stated her belief that “the material lent itself to being effective in so many other formats.” Perhaps, this is what

she was thinking. Or perhaps, she was thinking a quarterly Sunday school format. Or, she noticed what was left out of the handbook, namely, the traveling grandparent; what can be incorporated in the car or motorhome itself—the Legacy Lincoln or Lexus? Maybe, equipped with a “granny-bag,” stuffed full of age-appropriate Gospel-goodies to share with grandkids while traveling. Whatever she originally meant cannot be ascertained. Still, her comment sparked some useful afterthought concerning applicability.

## APPENDIX A

### ERIK ERIKSON'S PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

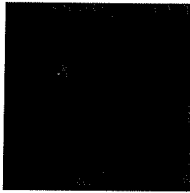
Approximate Age	Virtues	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relationship	Existential question	Examples
0-2 years	Hope	Basic trust vs. mistrust	Mother	Can I trust the world?	Feeding, abandonment
2-4 years	Will	Autonomy vs. shame and doubt	Parents	Is it okay to be me?	Toilet training, clothing themselves
4-5 years	Purpose	Initiative vs. guilt	Family	Is it okay for me to do, move, and act?	Exploring, using tools or making art
5-12 years	Competence	Industry vs. inferiority	Neighbors, school	Can I make it in the world of people and things?	School, sports
13-19 years	Fidelity	Identity vs. role confusion	Peers, role model	Who am I? Who can I be?	Social relationships
20-39 years	Love	Intimacy vs. isolation	Friends, partners	Can I love?	Romantic relationships
40-64 years	Care	Generativity vs. stagnation	Household, workmates	Can I make my life count?	Work, parenthood
65-death	Wisdom	Ego integrity vs. despair	Mankind, my kind	Is it okay to have been me?	Reflection on life

Note: These age categories are based upon Erickson's original work completed in 1963.

## APPENDIX B

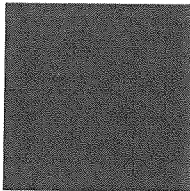
### THE WORDLESS BOOK

Have you ever seen a book without words or pictures? Even without words, this book tells us a story about God and the best gift of all.



The Black Page (Romans 3:23)

This black color reminds me of sin. See how dark it is. Sin is all of the bad stuff that you and I do that makes God really sad. What are some of the things that you do wrong? All of those things we just talked about are sin. We all make bad choices. Even mommies and daddies sin. The Bible says in Romans 3:23 that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." This means that there is nothing that we can do to ever make us good enough to reach God. The sin in our heart makes our hearts black. But there is good news! God had a plan.



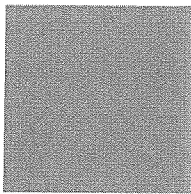
The Red Page (John 3:16)

God's plan was to send His perfect son, Jesus. At Christmas, we celebrated that Jesus was born on earth and lived to be a young man. Jesus never sinned. Because of this, He was able to take our place and die for our sins. The red reminds us of the blood that Jesus shed for our sins. Jesus died on the cross so that you and I can be forgiven for the bad things we do. But guess what? He didn't stay dead. Three days later, Jesus arose from the grave. Later, Jesus went to heaven. Now He is preparing a place for all those who believe in Him. Because of what Jesus did for you, you can have your sins forgiven!

John 3:16 says "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

### The White Page Psalm 51:7

Do you see how clean this page is? Do you remember how black your heart is from sin? You don't have to have a black heart. You can have a clean heart. Psalm 51:7 says: ..."wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Jesus wants to forgive you of all your sins and take them away. His blood will wash away all of that yuckiness and darkness. The Bible says that when Jesus forgives our sins He totally forgets about them.



### The Gold Page Rev. 21:18, 21

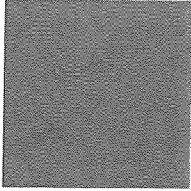
What color is this page? Gold reminds me of things that are very special. It reminds me of God. God is perfect and He does nothing wrong. God created you and me. Gold also reminds me of Heaven. Heaven is where God lives. The Bible even says that the streets of Heaven are paved with gold! Heaven sounds like a great place doesn't it? But there is one thing that can not ever be in Heaven. That is sin. We learned that the only way to get rid of our sin is to ask Jesus to wipe it away.

- Do you believe that you have sinned and made wrong choices?
- Do you believe that Jesus came to forgive you of your sins?
- Would you like to ask Jesus to come into your heart and make it white as snow

(If the answer is "yes" have the person repeat after you or say their own prayer.)

Here is a sample prayer:

Dear Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and make bad choices. Please forgive me! Thank you Jesus for dying for me, forgiving me of my sins, and then rising again! I ask You, Jesus to come into my life and make it clean. Please help me make good choices and live for You! Thank You for loving me! In Jesus' Name, Amen.



### The Green Page (II Peter 3:18)

Once we ask Jesus into our heart, we should not be the same. We now have Jesus to help us make good choices. The green page stands for the things that a Christian's need to grow! The Bible tells us in 2 Peter 3:18 that we are to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Plants need three things to grow: sunshine, rain and good soil. Christians need to pray, read the Bible, and spend time with other Christians at church. All three of these will help you grow.

If you have just prayed to God and meant it from your heart then you will go to Heaven when you die! You only have to receive the Lord once. Please go and tell your parents, brothers, and sisters that you received the Lord as your Savior and that you will be going to Heaven and tell them what they can do to go to Heaven.

## APPENDIX C

### GOD'S GOOD NEWS IN COLOR



A fresh take on the classic "Wordless Book" Gospel presentation.

The color **GOLD** reminds us of **Heaven**. It also makes us think about **God**, who lives in **Heaven**.

The Bible teaches us that God **made everything, including you and me**.

What does **God** see when He looks at you? Does He see somebody who makes Him happy?

God looked down from Heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that ... did seek God. *Psalm 53:2*

Because God can see everything we do, He knows us very well.

The Bible says that when God looks at us, He sees that everyone has done **bad things**.



The color **BLACK** reminds us of these **bad things**, which God calls **sin**. Because God is holy, our **sin** must be judged and paid for.

Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. *Psalm 53:3*

God loves us so much that He sent **Jesus**, His only son, to pay for our sin.

**The color RED reminds us of when Jesus suffered, and bled, and died on a cross for you and me.**

**Jesus** then rose from the dead, proving that He has won the battle over sin and death.

But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. *Romans 5:8*

**WHITE** makes us think of things that are **clean**.

The Bible says that we can be **clean** in God's sight by admitting that we are sinful, turning to God, and putting our trust in Jesus.

When we do that, He makes us ready for Heaven, and gives us a brand **new life** to live for Him.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. *Isaiah 1:18*

Living things **grow**. That's what **GREEN** reminds us of. God wants us to **grow** in our new life.

One very important way we **grow** is by reading the Bible. Another is by speaking with God in prayer.

God also wants us to **grow** by helping each other and gathering with other Christians.

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. 1 *Peter 2:2*

**God's good news is that He loves you and wants you to be with Him forever!**

**Remember the message of each color:**

**GOLD** reminds us of **God**, who lives in Heaven.

**BLACK** speaks of how our hearts are dark with **sin**.

**RED** tells us about **Jesus**, who died to set us free.

**WHITE** shows the purity of **new life** in Christ.

**GREEN** is all about growing as a **Christian**.

When God looks at your heart, does He see the darkness of sin, or does He see that you have been washed clean through Jesus Christ? If you would like to have your sins forgiven, now is the time to turn your heart to God and put your trust in Jesus Christ.

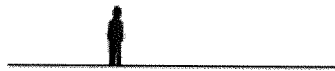
*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)*

## APPENDIX D

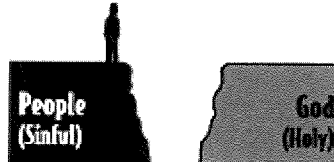
### THE BRIDGE ILLUSTRATION (TRACK AND DRAWING)

One of the oldest questions humankind has been asking is, “How can I know God?” The question is a valid one. What is He like? What can we do to please Him? How can we get to Heaven? If we work hard enough to be a good enough person will He accept us then? If we do enough religious activities to get His attention, will that do it?

Fortunately for us, the answer is surprisingly simple. The “Gospel” that the Bible talks about literally means, “The Good News,” and the news is good indeed!

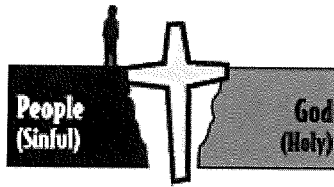


First, we have to start at the beginning. In Genesis 1:26, when God created the first humans, He said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness”, then God blessed them and spent the days walking and talking with the people He had created. In short, life was good.

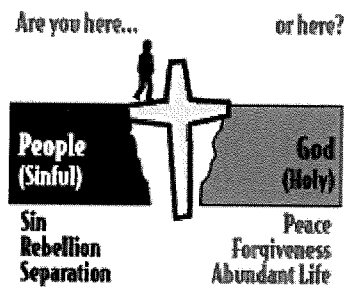


But why isn't life like that anymore? What happened to mess everything up? This brings us to the second point: when we (humankind) chose to do the opposite of what God told us, sin poisoned the world. Sin separated us from God, and everything changed. Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” and in Isaiah 59:2 we're told, “your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear.” This is especially bad news because there is no way for us to get across that gap on our own. We (humankind) have tried to find our way back to God and a perfect world on our own ever since then, and without any luck. We try to get there by being good people, or through religion, money, morality, philosophy, education, or any number of other ways, but eventually we find out that none of it works.

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death”  
(Proverbs 14:12).



There is only one way to find peace with God, and the Bible says it is through Jesus Christ. We were stranded without any way of getting back to our Creator, and we needed a way to pay for our sins and be clean again so that we could be welcomed back to be with Him. Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." So this is the Good News—that even though we were still enemies of God (as one translation says), Jesus came to die on the cross and pay the price for our sins so that we could have a relationship with Him again. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."



What then should be our reaction to this awesome news? This brings us to the last and most important part. John 5:24 says, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." Jesus Christ himself even says, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10), and Romans 5:1 says, "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

So how can I have peace with God, life to the full, and be confident of eternal life like these verses say? First, through an honest prayer to God, I have to admit that I'm not perfect—that I can't escape my sins, and I can't save myself. I follow this admission by believing that Jesus Christ died for me on the cross and rose from the grave, conquering death and sin. Then I invite Jesus Christ to live in me and be the Lord of my life, accepting His free gift of eternal life with Him.

The prayer can go something like this:

"Dear Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and that I need You to forgive me. I know that You died a painful death so that my sins could be washed clean. Thank you. I want to make You the Lord of my life, and I will trust and follow You. Everything I have is Yours

now.

In Your name, Lord.

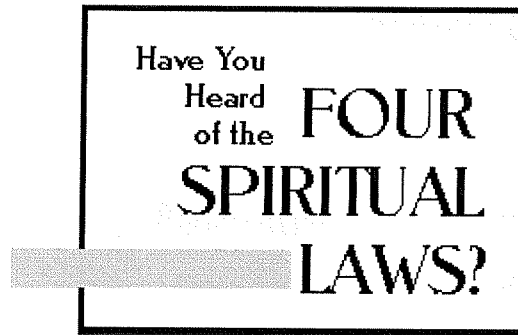
Amen.”

There is nothing magical about these words. It’s not the words themselves that make things right between you and God—it’s whether or not your heart really means it. We know this because in 1 Samuel 16:7, the Bible says, “The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

The best part of this whole process is that it doesn’t matter how badly we’ve messed up, Jesus is powerful enough to save anyone from their sins—even the worst of us. Romans 10:13 says, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” That’s fantastic news—no matter how badly we’ve messed up, we can place our complete trust in Jesus, and He will wipe all of our sins off the face of the earth. Jesus is the bridge to life.

## APPENDIX E

### THE FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS (TRACT)



Just as there are physical laws that govern the physical universe, so are there spiritual laws that govern your relationship with God.

#### Law 1

**God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life.**

##### **God's Love**

"God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NIV).

##### **God's Plan**

[Christ speaking] "I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly" [that it might be full and meaningful] (John 10:10).

Why is it that most people are not experiencing that abundant life?

Because...

## Law<sup>2</sup>

**Man is sinful and separated from God.  
Therefore, he cannot know and experience  
God's love and plan for his life.**

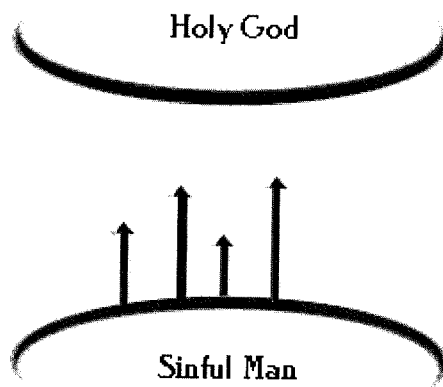
### **Man is Sinful**

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Man was created to have fellowship with God; but, because of his own stubborn self-will, he chose to go his own independent way and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is an evidence of what the Bible calls sin.

### **Man Is Separated**

"The wages of sin is death" [spiritual separation from God] (Romans 6:23).



This diagram illustrates that God is holy and man is sinful. A great gulf separates the two. The arrows illustrate that man is continually trying to reach God and the abundant life through his own efforts, such as a good life, philosophy, or religion -but he inevitably fails.

The third law  
explains the only  
way to bridge this  
gulf...

## Law 3

**Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin.  
Through Him you can know and experience  
God's love and plan for your life.**

### **He Died In Our Place**

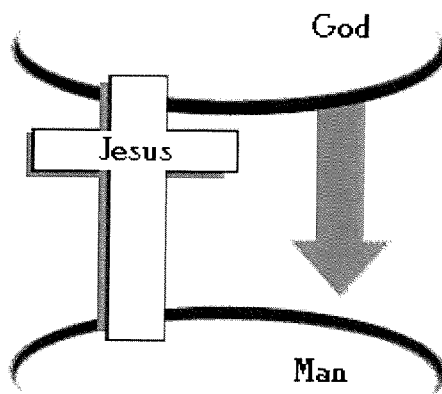
"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

### **He Rose from the Dead**

"Christ died for our sins... He was buried... He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures... He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred..." (1 Corinthians 15:3-6).

### **He Is the Only Way to God**

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but through Me'" (John 14:6).



This diagram illustrates that God has bridged the gulf that separates us from Him by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place to pay the penalty for our sins.

It is not enough  
just to know  
these three  
laws...

## Law 4

**We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;  
then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives.**

### **We Must Receive Christ**

"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

### **We Receive Christ Through Faith**

"By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as result of works that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

### **When We Receive Christ, We Experience a New Birth**

(Read John 3:1-8.)

### **We Receive Christ Through Personal Invitation**

[Christ speaking] "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him" (Revelation 3:20).

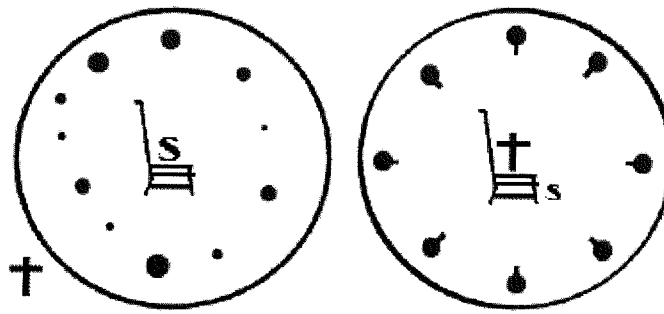
Receiving Christ involves turning to God from self (repentance) and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive our sins and to make us what He wants us to be. Just to agree **intellectually** that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross

for our sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an **emotional** experience.

We receive Jesus Christ by **faith**, as an act of the **will**.

These two circles represent two kinds of lives:





#### **Self-Directed Life**

S-Self is on the throne  
 †-Christ is outside the life  
 ●-Interests are directed by self, often resulting in discord and frustration

#### **Christ-Directed Life**

†-Christ is in the life and on the throne  
 S-Self is yielding to Christ, resulting in harmony with God's plan  
 ●-Interests are directed by Christ, resulting in harmony with God's plan

Which circle best represents your life?  
 Which circle would you like to have represent your life?

---

The following explains how you can receive Christ:

#### **You Can Receive Christ Right Now by Faith Through Prayer (Prayer is talking with God)**

God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude

of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life.

Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If it does, I invite you to pray this prayer right now, and Christ will come into your life, as He promised.

APPENDIX F  
THE ROMAN'S ROAD (TRACT)

**How You Can Know God's Love**

"There is a God in Heaven who loves you as you are and not as you should be."  
Yes... you are right... there is a God. You know that must be true. The heart of the human being longs for God, and logic demands divine existence.

While everyone believes God is... most sense separation from God. We know God must be holy and good. We see ourselves as unholy and not good. We conclude that God is angry with us and we cannot know Him.

Good News! This Testament of God's love is His Word to tell us that He loves us as we are. That love will save us from our sin and make us what we should be as God's children.

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

We hear Jesus say, "God so loved the world." God's love has no limitations. He loves "so". More than we can imagine. He loves everyone - not just some ones.

Romans 5:8 tells us that God loved us so that "when we were in our sin Christ Jesus came to die for us."

Romans 3:23

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

This verse tells us that all people have sinned. We have fallen short of God's intended purpose for us. God made us to know Him.... to receive His love and to love him in return.

For love to be love... for God to be God... and for humans to be humans.... God gave us a choice. We can choose to love ourselves and turn to our selfish pursuits. That is sin. In our sin we cannot know God and His love. The result of sin is that we are lost... separated from God.

Romans 6:23

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Wages are just payment... due reward... what one has coming because of labor. The just payment for our sin is death.

Death here means spiritual insensitivity. When we are still in our sin, we have no life with God. We are alive physically but dead spiritually. If we continue in that condition, we will be separated from God for all eternity.

The wages of sin is death. But God's free gift is eternal life. While wages are earned, a gift is offered... no strings attached. God says He will give us eternal life - life with Him - in the place of sin's payment of death.

How can God remain true to His holiness and forgive unholy sinners? Because Jesus, His Son, has paid the price for sin by His death on the cross.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we may be made the righteousness of God through Him."

Jesus arose from the grave to conquer sin and death for all who receive Him as God's free gift.

How can you receive God's free gift of love and life?

Romans 10:9-10

"that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

A person receives God's free gift of love and life by placing faith in Jesus Christ. To believe is simply to take God at His word. With our heart (whole believing) we believe that Jesus is God's Son who died for our sin on the cross and arose from the grave to live in us as Savior and Lord.

To believe in Jesus will result in confessing that faith with one's mouth.

Do you acknowledge that you are a sinner?

Do you believe by faith that Jesus, God's Son, died for your sin on the cross?

Will you now confess Him as your Savior and Lord?

Romans 10:13

"for Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."

This verse says that any person who will call upon the name of Jesus, the Lord, shall be saved.

To call means simply to ask in prayer. The verse does not require one to know more... do better... clean up one's life... or in any way try to add to what Jesus has done for us.

**Will you now call upon Jesus to save you from your sin so that you can know God's love and forgiveness?**

Pray like this: *"Dear God, I confess that I am a sinner, and I am sorry. I need a Savior. I know I cannot save myself. I believe by faith that Jesus, your Son, died on the cross to be my Savior. I believe He arose from the grave to live as my Lord. I turn from my sin. I ask You, Lord Jesus, to forgive my sin and come into my heart. I trust you as my Savior and receive you as my Lord. Thank you, Jesus, for saving me."*

When anyone calls on the Lord in this manner, **that one is saved according to God's Word**. If you pray a prayer of repentance and faith, **you are saved**. You have God's word on it.

If you have prayed this prayer to receive Christ as your Lord and Savior, why not record your decision to follow Jesus as follows. Often times, a good place to write this would be inside the cover of your bible:

*Believing by faith that God loves me and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for my sin and arise from the grave to live in me, I, \_\_\_\_\_, do this day, \_\_\_\_\_, repent of my sin and accept Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior. According to the promise of God in Romans 10:13, I have called upon His name and have His word for the assurance of my salvation*

## APPENDIX G

### BIBLICAL PLAN OF SALVATION

#### **Plan of Salvation: Rebirth is the Answer to Life's Most Important Question**

Plan of Salvation -- We think life's most important question is "Are you going to heaven when you die?" It is not a question of how good you are, whether you go to church, or how much money you give to charity. God says, in order to go to heaven, you must be born again (John 3:3).

#### **Plan of Salvation: How can we be Born Again?**

The plan of salvation is right in the Bible. God gives us His clear plan for being "born again."

First, we must acknowledge God as the Creator of everything, and accept our humble position in God's creation. *"You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."* (Revelation 4:11).

Next, we must realize that we are sinners. "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Because we are sinners, we are condemned to death. "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). This includes eternal separation from God.

But God loved each of us so much that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus, to bear our sin and die in our place. "God demonstrates His love toward us, in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Although we cannot understand how, God said our sins were laid upon Jesus and He died in our place. Jesus became our substitute.

In the Bible, a jailer asked his prisoners, Paul and Silas: "'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' So they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.'" (Acts 16:30-31).

It's very clear in the Bible, believe in Jesus as the one who bore your sins, died in your place, was buried, and whom God resurrected. It's Christ's blood and resurrection that assures us of everlasting life when we call on Him as our Lord and Savior. "For whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." (Romans 10:13). "Whosoever" includes each and every one of us?

Therefore, if you understand that you are a sinner, and you believe that Jesus Christ came as the one and only Redeemer of sin, then you understand the plan of salvation. The question is – are you ready to implement the plan, by receiving God's gift of His Son, Jesus Christ? If so, believe in Christ, repent of your sins, and commit the rest of your life to Him as Lord:

***"Father, I know that I have broken your laws and my sins have separated me from you. I am truly sorry, and now I want to turn away from my past sinful life toward you. Please forgive me, and help me avoid sinning again. I believe that your son, Jesus Christ died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead, is alive, and hears my prayer. I invite Jesus to become the Lord of my life, to rule and reign in my heart from this day forward. Please send your Holy Spirit to help me obey You, and to do Your will for the rest of my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."***

"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

If you decided to receive Jesus today, welcome to God's family. Now, as a way to grow closer to Him, the Bible tells us to follow up on our commitment.

- Get baptized as commanded by Christ.
- Tell someone else about your new faith in Christ.
- Spend time with God each day. It does not have to be a long period of time. Just develop the daily habit of praying to Him and reading His Word. Ask God to increase your faith and your understanding of the Bible.
- Seek fellowship with other followers of Jesus. Develop a group of believing friends to answer your questions and support you.
- Find a local church where you can worship God.

## APPENDIX H

### PRIMARY GOSPEL "TOOLS"

#### **The Wordless Book**

Child Evangelism Fellowship  
PO Box 348  
Warrenton, MO 63383-0348  
(636) 456-4321  
<http://www.cefonline.com>

#### **God's Good News in Colours**

Moments with the Book  
PO Box 322  
Bedford, PA 15522  
814-623-8737  
[www.mwtb.org](http://www.mwtb.org)

#### **The Bridge Illustration**

The Navigators  
PO Box 6000, Colorado Springs, CO 80934-6000  
Phone: 719-598-1212, Fax: 719-260-0479  
Email: [info@navigators.org](mailto:info@navigators.org)

#### **The 4 Spiritual Laws**

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30269



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## APPENDIX I

### TWO MAJOR AWARDS:

#### THE CHRISTOPHER'S / THE CHILDREN'S CROWN<sup>4</sup>

##### **The Christophers**

Do you know of the Christophers? Their mission "is to encourage people of all ages, and from all walks of life, to use their God-given talents to make a positive difference in the world."

Each year, the Christophers give awards for children's books (and other media) that "affirm the highest values of the human spirit."

In other words, they give awards to the best Christian children's books, even if they don't say "Christian children's books" on the cover!

##### **The Christophers Christian Children's Book Awards**

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##### **The Children's Crown**

Sandra Morrow, a librarian at Brentwood Christian School, is the woman who conceived and created the Children's Crown Awards for Christian children's books.

As a Christian school librarian, Ms. Morrow is an expert in Christian children's books. But the neat thing about her awards is how they're chosen...

Parents, teachers, librarians and students nominate worthy Christian children's books recently published. (**You** could nominate a Christian children's books you think highly of.) And then, each spring, children vote the winners.

That's right! These books are kid-certified. They're the Christian books that children themselves have said they loved reading!

##### **Children's Crown Christian Children's Book Awards**

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<sup>4</sup> "Christian Children's Books Your Child Will Read." *Grownup's Guide to the Best Children's Books Ever: Because Reading Matter*, accessed August 7, 2015, <http://www.best-childrens-books.com/christian-childrens-books.html>

## The Christopher's Book Awards

Young Adult and 12 and up

(The **only** problem with the Christopher's is they're always changing the age range categories on their Christian children's books. I try to lump them together appropriately below.)

- 2013 - Outcasts United by Warren St. John
- 2012 - Close to Famous, by Joan Bauer
- 2010 - A Pearl in the Storm: How I Found My Heart in the Middle of the Ocean, by Tori Murden McClure
- 2009 - Sunrise Over Fallujah, by Walter Dean Myers
- 2008 - Diamonds in the Shadow, by Caroline B. Cooney
- 2007 - Bread and Roses, Too, by Katherine Paterson
- 2006 - Hitch, by Jeanette Ingold
- 2005 - Thura's Diary: My Life in Wartime Iraq, by Thura Al-Windawi
- 2004 - The Silent Boy, by Lois Lowry
- 2003 - Left For Dead, by Pete Nelson
- 2002 - Soldier X, by Don Wulffson
- 2001 - The Wanderer, by Sharon Creech
- 2000 - Stop Pretending: What Happened When My Big Sister Went Crazy, by Sonya Sones
- 1999 - Shipwreck Season, by Donna Hill
- 1999 - Holes, by Louis Sachar
- 1998 - I Have Lived A Thousand Years, by Livia E. Bitton-Jackson
- 1997 - Glennis, Before and After, by Patricia Calvert
- 1997 - Irrepressible Spirit: Conversations with Human Rights Activists, by Susan Kuklin
- 1996 - Mother Jones: One Woman's Fight for Labor, by Betsy Harvey Kraft - (Ages 12-14)
- 1996 - Parallel Journeys, by Eleanor Ayer, with Helen Waterford and Alfons Heck
- 1995 - Taking Hold: My Journey Into Blindness, by Sally Hobart Alexander
- 1994 - Anne Frank: Beyond the diary, by Ruud van der Rol and Rian Verhoeven
- 1993 - Mississippi Challenge, by Mildred Pitts Walter

- 1990 - So Much to Tell You..., by John Marsden

### **The Christopher's Book Awards**

Ages approx. 10-12

- 2013 - Wonder, by R.J. Palacio
- 2012 - Words in the Dust, by Trent Reedy
- 2011 - Lafayette and the American Revolution, by Russell Freedman
- 2010 - Extra Credit, written by Andrew Clements, illustrated by Mark Elliott
- 2009 - Shooting the Moon, by Frances O'Roark Dowell
- 2008 - The Wild Girls, by Pat Murphy
- 2007 - Listen!, by Stephanie S. Tolan
- 2006 - Friendship According to Humphrey, by Betty G. Birney
- 2005 - The Teacher's Funeral: A Comedy in Three Parts, by Richard Peck
- 2004 - Iqbal, by Francesco D'Adamo
- 2003 - Pictures Of Hollis Woods, by Patricia Reilly Giff
- 2002 - Witness, by Karen Hesse
- 2002 - Uncle Daddy, by Ralph Fletcher
- 2001 - The Yellow Star, by Carmen Agra Deedy
- 2000 - A Symphony Of Whales, by Steve Schuch
- 1999 - Mary On Horseback: Three Mountain Stories, by Rosemary Wells
- 1998 - The Silver Balloon, by Susan Bonners
- 1997 - Frindle, by Andrew Clements
- 1996 - Been to Yesterdays: Poems of a Life, by Lee Bennett Hopkins
- 1994 - It's Our World, Too! Stories of Young People Who Are Making a Difference, by Phillip Hoose - (Ages 10 and up)
- 1992 - The Star Fisher, by Laurence Yep - (Ages 10 and up)
- 1991 - Mississippi Bridge, by Mildred D. Taylor
- 1990 - Can the Whales Be Saved?, by Dr. Philip Whitfield

## **The Christopher's Book Awards**

Ages approx. 8-10

- 2013 - The One and Only Ivan, written by Katherine Applegate, illustrated by Patricia Castelao
- 2012 - Hooper Finds a Family, by Jane Paley
- 2011 - Brother Jerome and the Angels in the Bakery, written by Father Dominic Garramone, illustrated by Richard Bernal
- 2010 - Most Loved in All the World, written by Tonya Cherie Hegamin, illustrated by Cozbi A. Cabrera
- 2009 - Clementine's Letter, by Sara Pennypacker
- 2008 - Owen & Mzee: The Language of Friendship, by Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff & Dr. Paula Kahumbu
- 2007 - The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane, by Kate DiCamillo
- 2006 - Game Day, by Tiki Barber and Ronde Barber with Robert Burleigh
- 2005 - Shredderman: Secret Identity, by Wendelin Van Draanen
- 2004 - Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez, by Kathleen Krull
- 2003 - The Ugly Princess And The Wise Fool, by Margaret Gray
- 2002 - Love That Dog, by Sharon Creech
- 2001 - The Mousery, by Charlotte Pomerantz
- 1999 - The Summer My Father Was Ten, by Pat Brisson
- 1998 - When Jessie Came Across The Sea, by Amy Hest
- 1995 - The Ledgerbook of Thomas Blue Eagle by Jewel H. Grutman and Gay Matthaei - Ages 8-12
- 1993 - Letters from Rifka, by Karen Hesse - (Ages 8-12)
- 1992 - The Gold Coin, by Alma Flor Ada
- 1990 - William and Grandpa, by Alice Schertle

## **The Christopher's Book Awards**

Ages approx. 6-8

- 2013 - The House on Dirty-Third Street, written by Jo S. Kittinger, illustrated by Thomas Gonzalez
- 2012 - You Can Be a Friend, by Tony and Lauren Dungy, illustrated by Ron Mazellan
- 2011 - Would You Still Love Me If..., written by Wendy LaGuardia, illustrated by Patricia Keeler
- 2010 - Nubs: The True Story of a Mutt, a Marine & a Miracle, by Major Brian Dennis, Kirby Larson & Mary Nethery
- 2009 - That Book Woman, by Heather Henson
- 2008 - How Many Seeds in a Pumpkin?, by Margaret McNamara
- 2007 - How We Are Smart, by W. Nikola-Lisa
- 2006 - I Could Do That! Esther Morris Gets Women the Vote, by Linda Arms White
- 2005 - The Hungry Coat: A Tale from Turkey, by Demi
- 2004 - The Dot, by Peter H. Reynolds
- 2003 - Dear Mrs. Larue: Letters from Obedience School, by Mark Teague
- 2002 - Beatrice's Goat, by Page McBrier
- 2001 - Hope Was Here, by Joan Bauer
- 2000 - Good Luck, Mrs. K! by Louise Borden
- 1999 - Raising Dragons, by Jerdine Nolen
- 1998 - The Gardener, by Sarah Stewart
- 1997 - Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman, by Alan Schroeder
- 1996 - The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey, by Susan Wojciechowski
- 1995 - Prize in the Snow, by Bill Easterling
- 1994 - The Crystal Ball, by Gerda Marie Scheidl
- 1993 - Rosie & the Yellow Ribbon, by Paula DePaolo
- 1993 - The Rainbow Fish, by Marcus Pfister
- 1992 - Stephen's Feast, by Jean Richardson

## **The Christopher's Book Awards**

Preschool-Kindergarten, approx.

- 2013 - The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore, written by William Joyce, illustrated by Joe Bluhm
- 2012 - Waiting for the Biblioburro, written by Monica Brown, illustrated by John Parra
- 2012 - Shine: Choices to Make God Smile, written by Genny Monchamp, illustrated by Karol Kaminski
- 2011 - Knuffle Bunny Free: An Unexpected Diversion, by Mo Willems
- 2010 - Ten Days and Nine Nights: An Adoption Story, by Yumi Heo
- 2009 - Close to You: How Animals Bond, by Kimiko Kajikawa
- 2008 - Taking a Bath with the Dog and Other Things That Make Me Happy, by Scott Menchin
- 2007 - Hero Cat, by Eileen Spinelli
- 2006 - Am I a Color Too?, by Heidi Cole & Nancy Vogl
- 2005 - Never, Ever Shout in a Zoo, by Karma Wilson
- 2004 - Little Bear's Little Boat, by Eve Bunting
- 2003 - Mole And The Baby Bird, by Marjorie Newman
- 2002 - Kiss Good Night, by Amy Hest
- 2001 - How Do Dinosaurs Say Good Night? by Jane Yolen
- 2000 - I Love You, Blue Kangaroo! by Emma Chichester Clark
- 1998 - Milo And The Magical Stones, by Marcus Pfister
- 1997 - The Log Cabin Quilt, by Ellen Howard
- 1995 - I'll See You When the Moon is Full, by Susi Gregg Fowler
- 1992 - Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch, by Eileen Spinelli
- 1990 - Keeping a Christmas Secret, by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

## **The Christopher's Book Awards**

All Ages

- 2013 - Forever You: A Book About Your Soul and Body, written by Nicole Lataif, illustrated by Mary Rojas
- 2000 - Grandad's Prayers Of The Earth, by Douglas Wood
- 1992 - Where Does God Live? Questions and Answers for Parents and Children, by Rabbi Marc Gellman and Monsignor Thomas Hartman
- 1991 - Paul Revere's Ride, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem as illustrated by Ted Rand

The Christopher's also present awards for promoting Christian values in TV, film, and books for grown-ups as well. Find out more at

The Christopher Awards - Christian Children's Books and more

## **The Children's Crown Christian Children's Book Awards**

Children's Gallery (Grades K-2)

- 2013 - Christian the Lion, by Anthony Bourke and John Rendall
- 2012 - You Never Heard of Sandy Koufax?, by Jonah Winter
- 2011 - Loving Marley, by Donald and Sara Hassler
- 2010 - Swift, by Robert Blake
- 2009 - Shep, Our Most Loyal Dog, by Sneed B. Collard, III
- 2008 - Two Dogs Swimming, by Lynn Reiser
- 2007 - Lost in the Woods: A Photographic Fantasy, by Carl R. Sams and Jean Stoick
- 2006 - Mama Played Baseball, by David A. Adler
- 2005 - The Sea Chest, by Toni Buzzeo ~ winner
- 2005 - Eaglet's World, by Evelyn Minshull ~ runner-up
- 2004 - A Fine, Fine School, by Sharon Creech ~ winner
- 2004 - Hank Aaron: Brave in Every Way, by Peter Golenboch ~ runner-up
- 2003 - I Love You Like Crazy Cakes, by Rose Lewis ~ winner
- 2003 - Olivia, by Ian Falconer ~ runner-up
- 2002 - Baby Whale's Journey ~ winner
- 2002 - Exodus ~ runner-up



- 2001 - Gingerbread Baby ~ winner
- 2001 - Stranger In the Woods ~ runner-up

### **The Children's Crown Christian Children's Book Awards**

#### **Children's Crown Award (Grades 3-6)**

- 2013 - The Secret Zoo, by Brian Chick
- 2012 - The Day-Glo Brothers, by Chris Barton
- 2011 - Masterpiece by Elise Broach
- 2010 - No Talking, by Andrew Clements
- 2009 - Trapped, by Peg Kehret
- 2008 - Friendship According to Humphrey, by Betty G. Birney
- 2007 - The World According to Humphrey, by Betty G. Birney
- 2006 - Escaping the Giant Wave, by Peg Kehret
- 2005 - Runt, by Marion Dane Bauer ~ winner
- 2005 - Stolen by the Sea, by Anna Myers ~ runner-up
- 2005 - The Great Serum Race, by Debbie S. Miller ~ runner-up
- 2005 - Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot, by Margot Theis Raven ~ runner-up
- 2004 - The Good Dog, by Avi ~ winner
- 2004 - Fannie in the Kitchen, by Deborah Hopkinson ~ runner-up
- 2004 - Gleam and Glow, by Eve Bunting ~ runner-up
- 2003 - Salt in His Shoes, by Deloris Jordan ~ winner
- 2003 - Star in the Storm, by Joan Harlow ~ runner-up
- 2003 - Janitor's Boy, by Andrew Clements ~ runner-up
- 2002 - Sky Memories ~ winner
- 2002 - Black Nell ~ runner-up
- 2002 - Bird Boy ~ runner-up
- 2002 - Shelter Dogs ~ runner-up
- 2002 - Spirit Horse ~ runner-up
- 2001 - Saving Shiloh ~ winner
- 2001 - Mei Fuh ~ runner-up

- 2001 - Lucy's Wish ~ runner-up

### **The Children's Crown Christian Children's Book Awards**

#### **Lamplighter Award (Grades 6-8)**

- 2013 - Out of My Mind, by Sharon M. Draper
- 2012 - Curse of the Spider King, by Wayne Thomas Batson and Christopher Hopper
- 2011 - Savvy, by Ingrid Law
- 2010 - DOES ANYBODY KNOW?
- 2009 - The Rise of the Wyrms Lord, by Wayne Thomas Batson
- 2008 - Beyond the Valley of Thorns, by Patrick Carman
- 2007 - The Dark Hills Divide, by Patrick Carman
- 2006 - The City of Ember, by Jeanne Duprau
- 2005 - Among the Betrayed, by Margaret Peterson Haddix ~ winner
- 2005 - Tree Castle Island, by Jean Craighead George ~ runner-up
- 2004 - Moonshiner's Gold, by John Erickson ~ winner
- 2004 - Angel on the Square, by Gloria Whelan ~ runner-up
- 2003 - I'm Not Who You Think I Am, by Peg Kehret ~ winner
- 2003 - The Barn Burner, by Patricia Willis ~ runner-up
- 2002 - Paperboy ~ winner (two way tie)
- 2002 - Chinese Cinderella ~ winner (two-way tie)
- 2002 - Frightful's Mountain ~ runner-up
- 2001 - Bloomability ~ winner
- 2001 - The Adventures of Midnight Son ~ runner-up

## APPENDIX J

### PACKET CONTENTS FOR SEMINAR

- 1- 8 ½ X 6 ½ Staples Clear Folding Envelope
- 1-3 inch round mirror
- 1-Worless Book Tract with "How to Lead A Child to Christ" Booklet
- 1-"God's Good News in Color" Tract
- 1-"Bridge to Life" Tract
- 1-"Four Spiritual Laws" Tract
- 1-"The Roman's Road" Tract
- 1-5 ½ X 8 ½ Plan of Salvation

## APPENDIX K

### SURVEY RESULTS

The following survey is being conducted for a Doctoral Thesis by Rev. David A. Cook, concerning the role that Parents and especially **Grandparents** play in sharing their religious beliefs with their grandchildren. The information gathered is completely anonymous and will only be used for informational data. The final results will be available in 2016.

#### Survey Questions

- 1) Have you come to know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? Y **100%** N **0%**
- 2) If so, for how many years? **53 Years (Average)**.
- 3) What age (approx.) were you when you first heard about Jesus?  
(0-6) **69%** (7-12) **21%** (13-19) **0%** (20-29) **6%** (30+) **3%**
- 4) Who did you first hear about Jesus from?  
(M/D) **67%** (MGm/MGf) **3%** (PGm/PGf) **3%** (Relative) **0%** (Friend of Family) **9%** (Pastor) **0%** (SS teacher) **18%** (Other)
- 5) In your opinion, should we let our children/Grandchildren make up their own minds when they are older about which religion they should adhere to? Y **60%**  
N **40%**
- 6) Can you say that any of your grandparents ever talked of their church activity or friends in the church? Y **61%** N **39%**
- 7) Can you say that any of your grandparents ever shared their church personal belief in Jesus Christ Y **58%** N **42%** If yes, which one(s)? **GM**.
- 8) In your own home growing up, were there any of the following: (Symbols-crosses, Menorahs, etc.) (Pictures-Jesus, wall plaques, etc.) (Music—Religious, Records, tapes, etc.) (Books-bibles, picture books, etc.) (Please Circle all that apply) Y **97%** N **3%** (**Large majority were books, Bibles, Pictures**)
- 9) In any of your Grandparents homes when you were growing up, were there any of the following: (Symbols-crosses, Menorahs, etc.) (Pictures-Jesus, wall plaques, etc.) (Music—Religious, Records, tapes, etc.) (Books-bibles, picture books, etc.) Y **97%** N **3%** **same as above Q#8**

- 10) When you were growing up, did you go to church with your parents on a regular basis?  
67% (Yes, very regularly)  
15% (Yes, but only sporadically)  
12% (Sort of, once or twice a year)  
9% (No)
- 11) When you were growing up, did you go to church with your grandparents on a regular basis?  
24% (Yes, very regularly)  
6% (Yes, but only sporadically)  
9% (Sort of, once or twice a year)  
54% (No)
- 12) Can you say, that your parents ever talked of their church activity or friends in the church) Y **72%** N **27%**
- 13) Can you say, that either or both of your parents ever shared their personal belief in Jesus Christ? Y **72%** N **27%**
- 14) What percentage of time did your grandparents participate with and/or support a community faith based social advocacy group? 51%> **9** <50% **21** 0% **63%**
- 15) Did your grandparents spend more time on church based groups and activities or with community groups and activities? \_\_\_NA\_\_\_ church  
 \_\_\_NA\_\_\_ community
- 16) On a scale of (1) Not Very----- (5) Very----- (10) Extremely important, how important is the Bible is your faith journey? **7.5**.
- 17) On a scale of (1) Not Very----- (5) Very----- (10) Extremely important, how important is it for parents to share their faith in Jesus with their children? **9**.
- 18) On a scale of (1) Not Very----- (5) Very----- (10) Extremely, how comfortable was/am I in sharing my personal faith in Jesus with my children **7**.
- 19) On a scale of (1) Not Very----- (5) Very----- (10) Extremely important, how important is it as a Grandparent to share their faith in Jesus with their grandchildren? **8**.
- 20) On a scale of (1) Not Very----- (5) Very----- (10) Extremely, how comfortable was/am I in sharing my personal faith in Jesus with my grandchildren? **7.5**.
- 21) Which of the following have you familiar with: (4 Spiritual Laws) **18%** (Wordless Book) **6%** (Bridge Illustration) **3%** (Meet you at the Pole) **3%** (Joshua Revolution) **3%** (Living Christmas Tree) **9%**
- 22) Bible teaching is what is missing in the life of kids today? Y **78%** N **9%** NA **15%**

- 23) Jesus is One way to heaven but other religions offer the same hope? Y **36%** N **51%** NA **14%**
- 24) It is my privilege and responsibility as a Grandparent to share my belief in Jesus Christ with each and every one of my Grandchildren. Y **75%** N **3%** NA **22%**
- 25) Grandchildren trust Grandparents. Y **93%** N **3%**
- 26) I would share more of Jesus with my Grandchildren if I had a resource tool to know what and when and how to share. Y **51%** N **15%** NA **34%**
- 27) It is OK for my parents to share with my children their religious views? Y **72%** N **0%** NA **18%**
- 28) I will share my faith in Jesus with my grandchildren even if their parents feel I should not do so. Y **58%** N **42%** NA **18%**
- 29) Does your family ever visit you for extended times at the Lake? Y **51%** N **33%** NA **16%**
- 30) Do you ever travel to see your children for extended visits away from the Lake? Y **45%** N **36%** NA **19%** Questionnaires 33/50 returned

## APPENDIX L

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

#### **Erik Erikson:**

Erik Homburger Erikson (June 15, 1902 – May 12, 1994) was a developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst known for his theory of human psychosocial development, and for coining the phrase "identity crisis." Although lacking academic credentials, he was an excellent writer and insightful researcher, winning prizes for his writings and becoming a distinguished professor at Harvard University. Erikson's own life experiences, growing up as an outsider, led him to study cultural influences on personality development.

Erikson's theory proposes that psychological development is a combination of pre-programmed biological changes in the body in the context of the social environment, and the person's responses to social situations—especially at points of developmental crisis. By resolving each crisis successfully, people can develop a stable, integrated personality. He applied this mechanism to the development of virtues such as courage, loyalty, care, and wisdom. By going beyond the Freudian focus on childhood sexuality, by including social environmental factors, and by dealing with a person's entire life-cycle from childhood to adulthood, Erikson's theory proved to be a major advance.

#### *Biography*

Erik Erikson was born in Frankfurt, Germany on June 15, 1902. His biological father was a Danish man who abandoned Erik's mother, Karla Abrahamsen, a young Jewish woman. She married Erik's pediatrician, Dr. Theodor Homberger, when Erik was three years old. They then moved to Karlsruhe in southern Germany.

Erikson grew up as an outsider, and his personal struggle to develop a sense of identity fueled his interest in psychosocial development. As a child he was Erik Homberger, a blond-haired, blue-eyed boy raised in a Jewish family and community. His Nordic appearance caused him to be teased by his Jewish peers; at grammar school, he was teased for being Jewish. As a young man, he traveled throughout Europe as a wandering artist. While in Vienna, he was trained in psychoanalysis by Anna Freud, receiving a certificate from the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. During that time he met and married Joan Serson, with whom he had three children.

Following the Nazi's rise to power, they moved to the United States where he changed his name to Erik Homberger Erikson. Erikson taught at major universities including Harvard, Yale, and the University of California at Berkeley, without formal academic

qualifications. During this time he carried out studies of the Lakota and the Yurok Native American tribes. Erikson published the results of these studies in 1950 in *Childhood and Society*, the first account of his theory of psychosocial development. Refusing to sign the "loyalty oath" required of all professors in the McCarthy era, Erikson returned to Massachusetts to work in a clinic, and later rejoined the faculty at Harvard.

Erikson analyzed the life of Luther (1958), and Mohandas Gandhi (1969) for which he won a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award, combining his interest in historical figures and the influence of culture on personality. He also wrote about other topics which concerned him, such as juvenile delinquency, racial tensions, and other social issues in America. In 1970, he retired from teaching. He remained a professor emeritus at Harvard, continuing to write and carry out research with his wife until his death in 1994. [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Erik\\_Erikson](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Erik_Erikson)

### **Jean Piaget:**

Jean Piaget (August 9, 1896 – September 16, 1980) is considered the developmental psychologist of the twentieth century. He preferred the title "genetic epistemologist" - researching the origins (genesis) of knowledge (epistemology). Piaget's discovery that intellectual development proceeds in an orderly fashion through a sequence of identifiable stages, in a way similar to physical growth, revolutionized our view of the child's mind. This has had significant repercussions in the educational arena, including regarding children as "creators" of their own knowledge, rather than as small, ignorant adults in need of training. The impact of his work has extended beyond psychology and education into philosophy, sociology, and even computer science.

However, despite his groundbreaking discoveries, Piaget's work is lacking in several areas, notably the importance of love, emotion, relationships with others, and spiritual values in our thinking. Thus it should be considered a pioneering, yet incomplete, account of human cognitive development.

### ***Biography: Early life***

Piaget was born in Neuchâtel, in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. His father, Arthur, was a professor of medieval literature at the University of Neuchâtel. Jean was a precocious child, and began his long scientific career in 1907 at the age of ten, with the publication of a short paper on his observations of an albino sparrow. His reason for publishing this observation was to show the curator of the Neuchâtel Museum of Natural Sciences that he was active in the field, so that he might be given permission to work at the museum outside regular hours.



Throughout his school years, Piaget developed his interest in biology, particularly mollusks, publishing several papers in professional journals. He became well-known among European zoologists, to the point of being offered a position as curator of a mollusk exhibition, which he had to turn down in order to complete high school.

Piaget experienced two intellectual "crises" during his adolescence. The first, as he put it, was "the problem of religion." His mother, a devout Protestant, enrolled him in a course of religious instruction. There, he found difficulty in reconciling certain religious dogmas with biology, and was surprised by the frailty of the proofs of God's existence, although at that time he in no way denied the existence of God. In his father's library he came across a work by August Sabatier entitled *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion Based on Psychology and History*, and was delighted with the notion of "evolution of dogmas." This sparked in him a passion for philosophy. The second "crisis" occurred when his godfather introduced him to the "creative evolution" of Henri Bergson. This was the first time Piaget had heard philosophy discussed by anyone who was not a theologian. It was both an emotional and intellectual shock: "I recall one evening of profound revelation. The identification of God with life itself was an idea that stirred me almost to ecstasy because it now enabled me to see in biology the explanation of all things and of the mind itself" (Evans, p. 111). Thus, Piaget came to see the epistemological problem (the problem of knowing) in a new light, and decided to dedicate his life to the biological explanation of knowledge.

He received a Ph.D. in natural science from the University of Neuchâtel in 1918. During this time, he published two philosophical essays entitled "La Mission de l'Idée" ("The Mission of the Idea") and "Recherche" ("The Quest"), which showed the direction of his thought. Recognizing the need for something other than philosophy, namely psychology, in his quest, Piaget then studied briefly at the University of Zürich under such prominent psychologists as Carl Jung. His interest in psychoanalysis can be dated to this period.

Piaget then moved to France where he continued his studies of psychology and philosophy at the Sorbonne. There in Paris, he met Theodore Simon and worked with him at a school for boys established by Alfred Binet, the developer of the Binet intelligence test. Piaget found that children's wrong answers to problems revealed hitherto unknown aspects of their reasoning. Thus began his experimental research into children's thinking. The following is an example of this type of questioning (Gruber and Vonèche, p.xxi), which led Piaget to formulate a period of childhood egocentrism:

Adult: Does the moon move or not?

Child (age 7): When we go, it goes.

Adult: What makes it move?

Child: We do.

Adult: How?

Child: When we walk. It goes by itself.

At this point Piaget formed his plan: first, he would study children's thinking and intelligence as they emerged in the first few years of life; then, he would construct a theory of structures of intelligence; and finally, he would be able to formulate a psychological and biological epistemology. In 1921, he returned to Switzerland as director of the Rousseau Institute in Geneva, and in 1923, he married Valentine Châtenay. They had three children, Jacqueline, Lucienne, and Laurent, whose development he studied from infancy. Over the next six decades he succeeded in accomplishing his plan. [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Jean\\_Piaget](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Jean_Piaget)

### **Lawrence Kohlberg:**

Lawrence Kohlberg (October 25, 1927 – January 19, 1987) was born in Bronxville, New York. He served as a professor at the University of Chicago as well as Harvard University. He is famous for his work in moral development and education. Being a close follower of Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, Kohlberg's work reflects and extends the work of his predecessor. A brilliant scholar, Kohlberg was also passionate about putting theory into practice. He founded several "just community" schools in an attempt to stimulate more mature moral thinking in young people, with the hope that they would become people who would create a more just and peaceful society.

#### *Life*

Lawrence Kohlberg grew up in a wealthy family and attended Phillips Academy, a private and renowned high school. During the Second World War, following his high school education, he decided to join the merchant marines. During his time as a sailor he helped Jews escape from Europe by smuggling them into Palestine.

After his service in the war he applied to the University of Chicago. He received his bachelor's degree in psychology in just one year. Kohlberg stayed at the University of Chicago for his graduate work, becoming fascinated with children's moral reasoning and the earlier works of James Mark Baldwin, George Herbert Mead, John Dewey, William McDougall, Jean Piaget, and others. He wrote his doctoral dissertation there in 1958, outlining what became his theory of moral development.

In 1968, at 40 years of age and married with two children, he became a professor of education and social psychology at Harvard University. There he met and befriended Carol Gilligan, who became his colleague and most outspoken critic of his theory.

During a visit to Israel in 1969, Kohlberg journeyed to a kibbutz and was shocked to discover how much more the youths' moral development had progressed compared to those who were not part of kibbutzim. Jarred by what he saw, he decided to rethink his current research and started by beginning a new school within a school, called the Cluster School, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The Cluster School ran as a "just community" where students and staff had a basic and trustworthy relationship with one another, using democracy to make all the school's decisions. Armed with this model he started similar "just communities" in other schools and even in a prison.

Kohlberg contracted a tropical disease in 1971 while doing cross-cultural work in Belize. As a result, he struggled with depression and physical pain for the following 16 years. On January 19, 1987, he took a day's leave from the hospital where he was being treated, drove to the coast, and drowned in the Atlantic Ocean. Rumors persist that he committed suicide. He was 59 years old. To this day Kohlberg's work is continued by his peers, friends, colleagues, and students.

## *Work*

### **Theory of moral development**

Kohlberg is most well-known for his theory of the development of moral reasoning. Fascinated by Piaget's work on moral development in children and adolescents, he developed his own interview technique for his doctoral dissertation. In what has become the classic method for studying moral reasoning, he presented a "moral dilemma" to 72 white boys aged seven to sixteen. This dilemma was in the form of a fictional story about a man called Heinz whose wife needed a special drug to save her life.

#### **Heinz and the Drug**

In Europe a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer.

There was one drug that doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered.

The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost to make. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about \$1,000, which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay

later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So Heinz got desperate and began to think about breaking into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. Should Heinz steal the drug?

Kohlberg explored the reasoning behind the boys' answers, not just whether they said Heinz should steal the drug or not. In this way he found that younger children based their reasoning on laws given by authority, such as it's bad to steal (Pre-conventional level), older children considered more the social conventions and what is socially acceptable (Conventional level), and finally, the most mature considered the welfare of others (Post-conventional level). These levels correspond to stages of cognitive development, as the children used increasingly complex and abstract reasoning to justify their responses. Based on these results, Kohlberg constructed a model of moral development consisting of six stages, two within each of the three levels. His doctoral dissertation, published in 1958, presented the child as a moral philosopher, developing his or her own moral judgments through a fixed sequence of increasingly flexible kinds of moral reasoning.

He continued to refine this model during his years at Harvard, investigating further the nature of each stage, the invariant nature and universality of the sequence of these stages, and how we progress through them. He never found anyone who fully satisfied his criteria for stage 6 reasoning, which is based on universal principles, although he cited historical figures, for example Gandhi, as performing on that level. In his later years he reflected on issues that went beyond morality into the realm of religious thought, such as "Why live?" and "Why be just in a universe that is largely unjust?" postulating a seventh stage of development in which we achieve peace and contentment through loving "that which is most worthy of love, or the most permanent cause of Love: Life, the Universe, God, or Nature" (Kurtines & Gewirtz, 1991, p. 42).

While his theory generated great interest, and continues to be the benchmark of theories of moral development, it was also the source of great controversy. His most famous critic was his colleague at Harvard, Carol Gilligan, whose book *In a Different Voice* (Gilligan, 1982) argued that since Kohlberg interviewed only boys, his theory was lacking certain components found in women's thinking, particularly the importance of relationships and an ethic of care as opposed to justice. For more detailed discussion of his theory and its critiques, see the article on moral psychology.

[http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Lawrence\\_Kohlberg](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Lawrence_Kohlberg)

**James W. Fowler:**

James W. Fowler is a graduate of Duke University and Drew Theological Seminary and earned his Ph.D. at Harvard University in Religion and Society in 1971, with a focus in ethics and sociology of religion. He pursued post-doctoral studies at the Center for Moral Development at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (1971-72). He taught at Harvard Divinity School (1969-75) and at Boston College (1975-76). In 1977 he joined the faculty of Emory's Candler School of Theology. Emory named him the Charles Howard Candler Professor of Theology and Human Development in 1987. His pioneering research and the resulting theory of faith development have earned him international recognition. His best-known book, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Development and the Quest for Meaning*, is in its 38th printing, and has been translated into German, Korean, and Portuguese editions.

Dr. Fowler has written or edited ten other books and more than 60 articles, contributing to the fields of practical theology and theological ethics. Four volumes of critical discussion of Fowler's research and theory have emerged from national and international seminars devoted to his work. He has received the Oskar Pfister Award from the American Psychiatric Association, "for enduring contributions to the dialogue between religion and psychiatry" and the William James Award from the American Psychological Association, "for contributions that advance the psychology of religion." Both awards came in 1994. In 1999 the University of Edinburgh awarded him a doctor of divinity degree, honoris causa.

From 1994 to 2005, Fowler served as the first full-time director of the Center for Ethics at Emory. He was a minister in the United Methodist Church.

<http://ethics.emory.edu/people/Founder.html>

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## VITA

David Arthur Cook was born in Chula Vista, California on June 2, 1956. He graduated from Mount Miguel High School following his junior year in 1973. In 1992, after serving 10 years in the family owned business, David entered New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, earning his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1996. In 1997, his academic pursuits led him to begin his graduate work where in 2000, he received his Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey. In 2000 he was ordained as a Presbyterian (U.S.A.) Minister of Word and Sacrament. In this role he has served churches in Pennsylvania, New York and Missouri. He and his wife, Bernice have two grown children; Brian, and Joel who reside in Oregon and Virginia. In 2011, he was accepted into the Doctor of Ministry Program although open heart surgery caused a year's delay, as well as a tract reconsideration, in beginning his studies. His expected graduation date is May of 2016.